

AFTER THIRTY YEARS



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W E Gladstone

AFTER THIRTY YEARS

BY

THE RT. HON. THE VISCOUNT GLADSTONE
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**THE
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THEATRE
STATE**

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TO MY WIFE

PREFACE TO THIRD AND REVISED IMPRESSION

THE reception of *After Thirty Years* by the Press far exceeded my highest hopes. Even in quarters politically opposed to my views on controversial politics, my book was treated with a kindly spirit of forbearance which I gratefully acknowledge.

It is particularly gratifying to me that my evidence on the personal side of my father's domestic life has been generously accepted.

As regards the chapters on controversial politics, while of course many reviewers do not accept my views, the facts, substance, and authority on which I base my arguments have stood the test of examination, and remain unchallenged.

A few of my critics complain that I have endeavoured in the chapter on Majuba to shield Mr. Gladstone at the expense of his colleagues. That is not so.

I have admitted frankly that Mr. Gladstone was responsible for what I believe to be a grave error of judgment in deciding at the outset of his Government to pursue the policy of federation without fulfilling the definite pledges given to the Transvaal in 1877. I have also shown that the lamentable military disasters on the Natal frontier arose through executive mistakes in giving effect to the decisions of the Cabinet. I have yet to learn that a Prime Minister is expected

to bear in biography and history the whole blame for the errors of his colleagues. A Prime Minister has to take responsibility in a special degree for the consequences of all action by his colleagues. But biographers without exception, and quite rightly, differentiate errors due to the personal views and decisions of the Prime Minister himself from faulty actions by colleagues in the discharge of their departmental duties.¹

In the Introductory Preface I have stated why I think Mr. Buckle's editorship of the comparatively small part of the three large volumes of the Queen's Letters (Second Series), which deals with my father, is not impartial. In letters to *The Times* Mr. Buckle indignantly repudiated this charge.²

I have given my reasons, and it is a matter of opinion whether I am right or wrong. But I must add this. Mr. Buckle argued that he had given much space to Mr Gladstone's letters to the Queen in explanation of his policy. This of course only applies to the years 1880-85. He also says quite truly that in not reproducing the Queen's letters published in the *Life of Disraeli*, he followed the precedent of Morley's *Life of Gladstone*. But the number, contents, and character of the Queen's letters differ very widely in the two biographies. I content myself with quoting a passage from Mr. Buckle's Introductory Note to Chapter XV., Vol. II. (Second Series), which refers to the Queen's letters on the Eastern Question, twenty-nine

¹ Mr. Buckle, for example, seemingly suggests that Lord Carnarvon (up to his resignation), and not Lord Beaconsfield, was primarily responsible for blunders in South Africa. *Life of Disraeli*, vol. vi. p. 416

² Mr. Buckle said that I had indirectly given him notice of my intentions. In this he is under a misapprehension. I am precluded from saying more.

in number, published in Vol. VI. of *The Life of Disraeli*:

This important correspondence is quoted and elucidated at great length in the first nine chapters, occupying 368 pages of Vol. VI of *The Life of Disraeli*, where the communications that passed at each critical stage are set out very nearly in full. *It is to that volume that those must turn who wish to follow in detail the Queen's sentiments and actions as the situation developed*

Needless to say that in these pages nothing is to be found on the side of Mr. Gladstone. They are devoted to the defence and approval of Lord Beaconsfield's Eastern policy, and to a whole-hearted condemnation of Mr. Gladstone, his views, motives, and actions. The Editor of the Queen's letters tells his readers that if they wish to follow in detail the Queen's views they must read Mr. Buckle's personal presentment of the Eastern Question in 368 *ex parte* pages.

I am therefore correct in saying that Mr. Buckle associates his own views with the text of the official publication.

It is for the public to say whether this is consistent with impartial editorship.

In the last chapter of my book I call attention to the entire absence of documents expressing the Queen's views on the Irish question. On June 9, Lord Iddesleigh, reviewing the position, wrote in his diary, "The real crux is Ireland".¹ On September 7, 1885, he refers to "this great and cardinal question". In June the Conservatives defeated the Liberals, technically on the Budget, in reality on the Irish question, and took office. I assumed that in the following four months preceding the General Election the Queen would follow Irish affairs with the appre-

¹ Andrew Lang's *Sir Stafford Northcote*, vol. ii p. 210.

hensive and unfailing interest she had hitherto shown, and would express with her usual frankness her views in letters to the Prime Minister and his colleagues, to her personal friends, and in her own Diary. Thinking it inconceivable that no documentary evidence existed, it appeared to me that a serious responsibility rested on Mr. Buckle. But on December 17 he wrote to *The Times* to say that he had not been able to find in the Windsor archives any documents bearing on the essential points I mentioned in my book. Of course I accept this statement without qualification. I had no intention whatever to suggest that Mr. Buckle had deliberately concealed important documents, but certain passages taken together implied to him, and to others, that I had made such a charge. I very much regretted this and at once inserted a slip to that effect in my book.

I have now omitted or amended the passages to which Mr. Buckle took exception.

This, however, does not affect, either, the main argument in the chapter or the evidence in Sir A. Hardinge's *Life of Carnarvon*. Both remain unquestioned and unshaken.

The letters from the Queen to Mr. Gladstone from 1880 to 1885, published in Vol. III. of the official series, were all taken, not from the originals, but from copies kept at Windsor. We now know from Mr. Buckle that there are no copies of the Queen's letters to Lord Salisbury during the last six months of 1885 in the Windsor archives, on the proposed new departure in Ireland.

There is a strange passage in Mr. Buckle's letter of December 17. "Negotiations, if they deserve that name, were wrapped at the time in mystery—mystery which may perhaps be finally dispelled when Lady Gwendolen Cecil publishes

the next volume of her admirable *Life of Lord Salisbury*." I have at least elicited from Mr. Buckle that there is a mystery.

I prefer to sum up the matter, not in my own words, but in the words of the leading article in the *Manchester Guardian* of January 5, 1929.

Mr. Buckle admits that the descriptions of these events given in his introductory note to chapter 7 of the third volume should have been fuller. His narrative as it stood left the impression that there was never any serious purpose behind these proceedings, an impression unjust to Lord Salisbury. Lord John Manners's memorandum already mentioned contains a passage which shows that Ireland was in Lord Salisbury's mind from the first. Gladstone's Government was defeated on June 8. "On Thursday, 11th," said Lord John Manners's memorandum, "Salisbury lunched with us and had a long and confidential conversation with me. . . . He then, after discussing minor men and appointments, asked us to consider whether in dealing with the Irish problem that country could be divided for local and private Bill purposes into four provinces with a central court of appeal."¹ It is clear from Sir Arthur Hardinge's book that down to the election the Conservative Government was against coercion and for concession.

Mr. Gladstone proposed a moderate scheme of Irish Local Government in 1882. Even for the Liberals this was emphatically a new departure, and it was so termed at the time.

Far more startling in its novelty was the scheme which Lord Salisbury adumbrated to Lord John Manners, and it was evidently in his mind when he made his famous Newport speech on October 7, 1885.

As the dilemmas suggested by the position are fully set forth in Chapter V. of Part III., it is unnecessary to say more.

March 1929.

¹ Whibley's *Lord John Manners and his Friends*, vol. II. p. 307.

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INTRODUCTORY PREFACE

OUGHT a son to apologise for writing about his father? It must depend upon circumstances. Till recently I had no intention to write. I make no apology, but some explanation may be desirable.

Lord Morley's great book on Mr. Gladstone was a comprehensive exposition of his public life. But the spaciousness of his survey and much historical digression left but little room for the domestic life, which in the matter of time far exceeded the days given by Mr. Gladstone to public affairs. Luminous and interesting as are Lord Morley's pages, they did not present for those who did not know Mr. Gladstone a true and complete view of his personality. Of this hostile writers have taken full advantage. Imagination and ill-will have transformed the real man into what is repellent and untrue.

While the tendency of the modern writers is to seek the truth about great men from the habits and affairs of their private life, Mr. Gladstone seems to be excluded from this process. He is judged too frequently as a man by the test of party prejudices, by a facile imputation of motives, and by an almost childish belief in unfounded gossip.

I believe I have read most of the books on Mr. Gladstone, favourable and otherwise, that have been published in this country. Several of these quite seriously present and suggest views of him which are mere caricatures. Stories without

foundation, and grotesque misrepresentations of his characteristics, motives, and habits, by constant repetition are increasingly accepted as true. So famous a writer as M. Maurois sees in him little more than a foil for his book on Disraeli. By the charm and humour of his writing readers are seductively led to the belief that what he says must be true. He makes it appear that he had studied Mr. Gladstone in detail. For example, he says that Mr. Gladstone, when awaiting election results, would sometimes cover *thirty-three* miles on foot at Hawarden in a day! This suggests exact knowledge on the part of the author. On holiday and among the hills Mr. Gladstone certainly walked long distances. In my lifetime he never walked ten miles at Hawarden. He had neither inclination nor the time.

“ Gladstone ”, he says, “ was interested in two things only : religion and finance.” Here he is quite hopelessly wrong. Or again, coming to more serious history, M. Maurois in his delightful style alleges that, grieving to see the prosperity of the wicked and scornful, contrary to usage, Mr. Gladstone picked a quarrel in the first week of Disraeli’s brief and minority Government of 1867 by cleverly conjuring up the Irish Church as the point of attack. He omits the fact that for more than a score of years Mr. Gladstone had been studying this particular question ; that three years before he had lost his seat at Oxford because of his views on Irish disestablishment ; that with a general election imminent and with a majority of the House supporting him, it was his constitutional duty on this, the first opportunity he had, to announce this policy to the House and the country.

It is now a fashion to make statements of fact and without giving any reference to draw

inferences. It is an insidious method. M. Maurois, with merely a superficial knowledge of Mr. Gladstone, relies for his facts on his own lively imagination. The appetite for what is new and amusing leads to ready acceptance by readers.

Much may be forgiven to a foreign and so entertaining writer. But what may be a foible in M. Maurois is a definite and unscrupulous purpose in writers who readily accept, without evidence and inquiry, almost anything which supports their prejudices. The only evidence which can be conclusive must come from those who knew Mr. Gladstone not only in public life but in the intimacies of private life. It will not, I think, be denied by anyone that my knowledge entitles me to speak for Mr. Gladstone's family. Born in 1854, I lived in my father's house till he died in 1898. For fifteen years I was with him a member of the House of Commons. There was never a breach in our family life. It seems to me a duty to give my evidence before it is too late. Only three of us survive. I write our views and they are the views of those who have gone. I must add this. Of the numberless people, men and women, friends and relations, Conservatives and Liberals alike, who knew Mr. Gladstone in private as well as in public life, so far as I know, not a single one has recorded impressions and opinions which conflict in any essential degree with the views of Mr. Gladstone's personality and character which I give in this book. On the other hand, of the writers who have traduced or disparaged his personality, his character, intentions, and motives, not one has had even the personal knowledge which approaches to intimacy.

To prevent misunderstanding, I except Queen Victoria. The relationship between the Sovereign and her ministers requires a category of its own.

Up to 1874, like all other leading politicians, Mr. Gladstone was exposed to the rough and tumble of party politics, with its ups and downs and its varying periods of popularity and unpopularity. Had he died in 1875, I think it would be true to say that judgment on his life's work would have been formed—apart from individual opinions on matters like Free Trade or Church establishment—by something like general agreement. After his return to public life in 1876, and because of subsequent events, a storm arose, and still the waters are rough. The final collision with Mr. Disraeli (1876–80) focussed on Mr. Gladstone intense hostility, personal as well as political. Conservatives neither forgot nor forgave. From that date onwards he was attacked personally with a bitterness almost unexampled. The sudden uprising of the Queen's wrath against Mr. Gladstone in 1876 concurrently with her devotion to Lord Beaconsfield and his policy is clearly shown in Mr. Buckle's *Life of Disraeli* and in the Queen's letters. Lord Beaconsfield's Eastern policy was wrong and it broke down. Mr. Gladstone's policy was right and it prevailed. For the one a pinnacle. For the other the depths of royal disfavour. The publication of the volumes mentioned has in great measure revived the old bitterness of fifty years ago. The proof of this is to be found in the political literature of the last twenty years. Rarely do Mr. Gladstone's critics go back further than 1876 in the process of their attacks and strictures. The Queen could not forgive Mr. Gladstone's strenuous opposition to the policy of Lord Beaconsfield. Conservatives never ceased to resent the defeat of 1880. There was, and there still is, concentrated attack upon him. Whatever the question might be, every effort has been made, and still is made, to

fasten blame and discredit on Mr. Gladstone alone, as if men like Lord Hartington, Mr. Chamberlain, Lord Granville, Sir William Harcourt, and Lord Spencer, who shared his responsibility though not in so high a degree, were mere cyphers.

Mr. Buckle had his fling in the last volumes of the *Life of Disraeli*; in 1926 came Volume II. of the Queen's letters; in 1927 M. Maurois published his book on Mr. Disraeli; and finally in January of 1928 we get Volume III. of the Queen's letters. A positive cataract of aspersion and disparagement.

Yet is it not true that before the storm broke in 1876 Mr. Gladstone had been in public life for over forty years, and that his name is permanently associated with the progressive advance, administrative, legislative, financial, and social, which by common consent increased the authority and renown of the Empire? We find little or nothing of this in the publications I have quoted. Is this just?

The thesis of Mr. Buckle and many other writers is that as a statesman Lord Beaconsfield stands higher than Mr. Gladstone. Such a thesis can only be made good by a comparative study of work accomplished, human progress hastened, of permanent influence for good in national affairs and in international relations. On this I can say here what would not be germane to the chapters in this book which relate to Mr. Disraeli.

Lord Beaconsfield's renown is principally associated with the long and extraordinary tale of his rise to power, his brilliant speeches, his literary work, wit and sardonic humour, and a personality both mysterious and sensational. Here Mr. Buckle is at his best. But he labours too much to establish his hero's reputation on purely political grounds at the expense of Mr. Gladstone.

Lord Beaconsfield was for nearly forty years in the House of Commons. He was the centre of many debates and ministerial crises. But where do we find him personally associated with a single measure of great importance that passed into law?

I turn to Mr. Buckle and the Franchise Act of 1867. Jacob took Esau's clothes but had not the audacity to claim them as his own. Mr. Buckle does not hesitate to claim for Mr. Disraeli the whole credit for the Act and the policy it connotes. Mr. Disraeli had opposed the less extensive Liberal Bill of 1866 not on the grounds of its terms but of its policy, and by the help of the Liberal majority passed a wider measure in 1867. In 1875, says Mr. Buckle, he "piloted" the Agricultural Holdings Bill.¹ As a matter of fact this modest and sound Bill was piloted through the House of Commons by the Attorney-General and the First Lord of the Admiralty, Mr. Ward Hunt. The Conservative Government during their six years of office passed some important Bills to which perhaps justice has not been done by Liberal writers. Mr. Disraeli's share in them was practically nil, excepting the Public Worship Bill—to put down Ritualism—which, as Mr. Buckle has said, soon passed into desuetude;² and the Royal Titles Act, a measure of doubtful wisdom. A meagre record. No Prime Minister took less part or showed less interest in the activities of his colleagues. It is true that Mr. Buckle endeavours at length to associate Mr. Disraeli with the Public Health Act of 1875. The story is too long to relate here, but the effort is so ingenious and characteristic that I give it in the Appendix.³

¹ *Life of Disraeli*, vol. v. p. 363

² *The Times*, June 14, 1928.

³ See Appendix I.

Three times Chancellor of the Exchequer, his Budgets were weak and left no mark. He opposed almost every Liberal measure of importance, though without offering any constructive alternative. He had no remedy for Ireland except coercion. He was in office for ten and a half years. What admirer of his has ever indicated anything that he accomplished in administration? What opponent of Mr. Gladstone has ever denied Mr. Gladstone's achievements in administration? In the 'fifties, when the great dominions were in the making, Mr. Disraeli struck an utterly false note. He led no great political movement, unless it is found in the tenets of a narrow Imperialism. Though democracy was surging up he was no guiding force, unless we except the effort to unite the country gentlemen and Tory democracy. What attempt did he make to induce the social reforms so enthusiastically presented in *Coningsby*? He was outside the sphere of the practical work of administration and legislation, to which Mr. Gladstone devoted the greater part of his political life.

In foreign policy his opportunity did not come till 1874. The attractive stroke in the purchase of the Suez Canal shares, brilliant as an investment, was fateful in consequences. At Berlin in 1878 he broke up the integrity and independence of Turkey which, for three years, he had striven ineffectually to maintain.

From 1832 Liberalism was in the ascendant. Mr. Gladstone from 1859 was its leading exponent for thirty-five years. Down to 1886 the Conservatives fought a losing battle. Yet with this standing disadvantage, Disraeli not only forced his way to the top of the Conservative party but won a great, though temporary, victory at the polls against Mr. Gladstone in 1874. It was a

marvellous performance. But it must be heavily discounted if Mr. Gladstone was in reality the insincere, unattractive, and unpopular demagogue pictured by Mr. Buckle and other authors.

The contrast between the two great rivals strikes the imagination, and is an unfailing source of legitimate humour. The fact that for so long they were leaders of the two parties gives historical importance to their encounters. Disraeli throughout worked against odds. He was not in the full sense of the word a practical politician. Though capable of sustained effort, he was repelled by the mass of detail required for the constructive work in the House of Commons, of which Mr Gladstone was a master. He seemed never to give personal attention to political movements outside Parliament, and to the essentials of party organisation. His deficiencies in these respects make his own political achievements more remarkable. In politics Mr. Gladstone was a dynamic force in the instruction and the direction of public opinion. In legislation and administrative workmanship he was supreme. Here Disraeli could no more compete with Mr. Gladstone than Mr. Gladstone could compete on the main lines of Disraeli's own genius and capacities.

Mr. Disraeli and Mr. Gladstone in race, training, modes of thought and action, were poles apart. Of the greater qualities it might almost be said that they had nothing in common but courage, and, *pace* Queen Victoria, patriotism.

Lord Morley did not seek to add to the stature of Mr. Gladstone by continued and acrid depreciation of his great opponent. Mr. Buckle might have reflected that the author of the *Book of Kings* would not have enhanced the victory of David by any effort to prove that Goliath was a weakling.

Recent critics are fond of alleging by assertion and innuendo that Mr. Gladstone's political career was a sequence of errors. All leading statesmen make mistakes, sometimes many in a short time. Mr. Gladstone himself admits that he was no exception to the rule. But successful performance has to be weighed against mistakes. For most detractors a comprehensive allusion to Jefferson Davis, Majuba, Gordon, and Home Rule is enough. *Ex post facto* diatribes do not always hold water. Even when mistakes are admitted they may be found to be due to the overpowering complexity of events rather than to blameworthy failure in judgment or effort.

Apart from actions which were and still are matters of political opinion, Mr. Gladstone's serious errors were remarkably few. A leading statesman for forty years, he was in office for nearly thirty. The length of time gave an almost unprecedented opportunity for errors. Yet their totality, relatively to length of time, is small. Weigh the errors against things achieved in trade and finance, in the Civil Service and legislation, in the promotion of international good-will and peace, in the guidance of new and turbulent forces to loyal acceptance of all that was best in the Constitution, and then let judgment be given.

Where politics are concerned I am like other party men, a partisan. I have no complaint to make of criticism of Mr. Gladstone up to 1876. The great political issue between Disraeli and Gladstone is centred in the Eastern Question. Up to that point conflicts, brilliant and exciting as they were, have the usual give-and-take character of party controversy. The Eastern Question was so identified with the personalities of the two leading combatants that in the mists of passion truth is obscured. The facts and results are

recorded in history, nothing remains to be discovered, and if I am wrong in my conclusions, demonstration should be easy.

In Part I. my father is pictured as he was to his family and intimate friends. The chapters are all personal to him. I dispose of many myths and account for some misconceptions. Some chapters deal with matters omitted or briefly mentioned by Lord Morley. I sum up my own conclusions.

Part II. is political. The subjects are contentious, but I have not, I trust, dealt with them in an unfair spirit.

Part III. is devoted entirely to the consideration of the Queen's published letters and records, so far as they concern Mr. Gladstone. Her letters in 1876-78 necessarily had to come into review in the earlier chapter on the Eastern Question in Part II.

Mr. Gladstone on taking office in 1880 at once noticed the changed attitude of the Queen. How much it affected him we did not know till after his death. We knew he felt it acutely, but he said little. In his Diary of January 2, 1898, is a definite injunction that we should be silent about his personal relations with the Queen in the later years of his life. That injunction we have hitherto faithfully observed. Mr. Buckle has plainly revealed the views of the Queen. It is a revelation from one side only. In his *Life of Disraeli* he brings in the Queen as a principal witness against Mr. Gladstone. Many reviewers of Volume III. of the Queen's letters have seized on this evidence of the Queen's devotion to Lord Beaconsfield and her unqualified approval of his policy for emphasising their own condemnation of Mr. Gladstone. This definitely and absolutely frees my brother and myself from the restriction which loyal respect to the Queen had suggested

to Mr. Gladstone. It becomes a duty to publish Mr. Gladstone's own records on the subject in full and to make clear the circumstances under which the Queen's denunciations were expressed. One side only has been given. From 1876—and not before—the Queen condemns not only the policy but the character and motives of Mr. Gladstone, and up to his death she never changed. My brother Henry and I are the sole surviving executors under Mr. Gladstone's will, and he is in full accord with the statements I make in this book.

I have endeavoured to write in that spirit of restraint and loyalty to the Crown which Mr. Gladstone himself would most certainly have desired. I have written on our sole and entire responsibility.

The publication of the Queen's letters was courageous and wise. The Queen's interest and intervention in politics were marked and constant. In one way or the other results followed and belong to history.

The editorial task was difficult and responsible. Much of the great stores of material was political and controversial. Wide political experience was essential, and the choice of editor cannot be impugned or even criticised. No one can contest the outstanding capacities of Mr. Buckle for the post.

In the course of Part III. I have occasion to make strong comments on what I consider are lapses from the editorial impartiality which I think it right to acknowledge Mr. Buckle maintains apart from Mr. Gladstone.

These lapses are matters of opinion and argument, and carry no reflection whatever on the choice of editor.

The Queen's letters refer to political and

party contentions of a particularly acute nature, and directly concern Mr. Gladstone. Mr. Buckle happens to be entirely out of sympathy with Mr. Gladstone's character, and strongly opposed to his policy, in particular on the Eastern Question and Ireland. This is clearly shown by his *Life of Disraeli*. It is not possible for a man so absolutely committed on one side, with a mind permeated by likes and dislikes, to pass at will to impartiality. It cannot be done, so subtle are the angles of his own personal vision.

On an intelligible principle the Queen's letters which have been published in biographies are as a rule not reproduced in the official series. One result I must make plain. The Queen's letters published by Lord Morley are virtually non-controversial. Those published in the *Life of Disraeli* are more numerous, and for the most part deal with highly controversial matters. After 1876 they number fifty-nine. Twenty-nine of these relate solely to the Eastern Question. These are essential to a proper understanding of the Government policy. The letters on the Eastern Question in the official series are insufficient for an adequate interpretation of events. Consequently, any reader who desires sufficient information must read Volume VI. of the *Life of Disraeli* in conjunction with Volumes II. and III. of the Queen's letters. Biographer and editor are interlaced. It is impossible to leap backwards and forwards between partiality and impartiality. The contexts and comments of the biographer cannot be banished when the reader passes to the cooler atmosphere of editorial work.

I will not touch here on matters with which I deal fully elsewhere, except on one point. Between June and December 1885 the choice in Ireland between coercion and conciliation was

under the consideration of Lord Salisbury's Cabinet, and remained undecided till the middle of December. Here Mr. Gladstone is not directly concerned. Throughout this period we are given no indication of the Queen's views. What is the explanation of this unusual silence in this grave and protracted crisis on Irish affairs ? Into this question I have gone at length, as the issues are important.

I was born, have lived, and shall die Gladstonian Liberal. My point of view, sometimes perhaps coloured by a not unnatural partisanship, is occasionally somewhat different from Lord Morley's. He came into Parliament with views formed by his own thoughts and studies. His intimate friendship with Mr. Gladstone only began in 1886. I came into Parliament as a youngster heart and soul with his father. I give my views of Mr. Gladstone's position and action from my own personal knowledge, records, and experience. I am aware that I have no skill or experience in the writing and composition of books. But facts are facts, and I found my statements upon them, giving chapter and verse. If I am in error, it can be shown where and why. I may be told that in writing on State affairs I carry no authority ; that I am just a prejudiced son. At least I claim the privileges of a son. There are few indeed alive except my brother Henry and myself who knew my father in the intimacies of domestic life. I write the truth about him thirty years after his death.

I see an erroneous conception of Mr. Gladstone arising. Literary artists paint their pictures of a man they did not know and perhaps never saw. The times demand novelty, and imagination has no bounds. In days to come historians in the spirit of truth will seek and will not ignore the

evidence of those who speak with knowledge. I record my evidence.

I have only to express my grateful thanks to those who have helped me with their counsel and sympathy in the preparation of this book, and first of all to my wife, whose co-operation has been continuous. Through life my brother Henry has been to me a strong counsellor and the most generous friend, and I have worked on this book in close concert with him. Lord Buckmaster has most kindly read the proofs, and by criticism and suggestions he has given me invaluable help. I have also to express my thanks to Mr. Vivian Phillips and Mr. Tilney Bassett for their assistance, to my old friend S. H. Whitbread, for giving me the portrait of his father, and for a similar reason to Arthur Ponsonby.

I am indebted to Lord Balfour for allowing me to publish his letters to Mr. Gladstone written in 1885.

I must apologise for a certain amount of repetition. The arrangement of the book makes avoidance difficult.

PART I

CHAPTER I

PATRIA POTESTAS

“ The man and the politician are inseparable, feelings and actions determine one another mutually, private life and public life run concurrently.”—EMIL LUDWIG

SOUTH-WEST from Chester, across what used to be the marshes of the Dee, rise the Welsh foothills, and there lies Hawarden.

The modern residence, encased in stone and castellated in 1809 by Nash in the style of architecture not uncommon at the time, contains a brick house built during the Restoration, after the main defences of the ancient castle—a Royalist stronghold—had been blown up by Cromwell. The castles, old and new, but 200 yards apart, are inseparable. The keep of Edward I., still solid in structure, remains the commanding feature, with its distant view of Beeston Castle and Chester towards the north-east, the Dee estuary to the north, the Welsh mountains to the west, and the Wrekin rising some forty miles to the south. Here, on the battleground of the Welsh March, was my father’s resting-place for nearly sixty years. And what a place for us boys, with its 1000 acres of park and woodlands, its glorious trees, its streams, and the romance of the old ruins.

London was Mr. Gladstone’s school. His heart was ever at Hawarden. To the family circle was

added the congenial company of his brothers-in-law, Stephen and Henry, the last of the Glynness.¹

Lord Morley, when he planned his biography, decided that much space must be given to explanatory history. Quantities of material had to be excluded or rigidly compressed. The presentation of Mr. Gladstone as a public man and as a student is as fine in design and completeness as it is in literary brilliancy. But domestic life only gleams in patches, and yet the six or seven months every year in family seclusion give the truest understanding of him as a man.

The opinion still exists that his personal life was characterised by qualities which made him austere, masterful, restless, combative, excitable, argumentative, given to casuistry, unable or not caring to understand others, dictatorial, carried away by popular applause and by an uncontrollable passion for power. If this were true he would have been a perfectly terrible person in private life. For such characteristics are part of the soul of a man, and would be manifest and operative in all phases of life.

The prevailing belief that he lived his whole life in a glare of publicity which became almost a second nature is not the truth, except in so far as a political life constitutes a life lived in the public eye in varying degrees of intensity. Up to 1868 the limelight thrown on him as a distinguished politician likely to be Prime Minister was not beyond normal. After 1868 it increased steadily. The final duel with Lord Beaconsfield, and the combination of age and vitality in his later years, aroused a personal interest not limited to Liberals. It was fanned and advertised by an ever-expanding press. Though he might be abroad or at home in complete seclusion, politicians and the

¹ See Appendix II, "The Glynness."

press, whether in attack or defence, in the stress of political polemics never left him alone. So it is true that after 1868, the year of his first Prime Ministership, publicity reached an unprecedented scale.

What seems not to be realised is this. In controversial action Mr. Gladstone flung himself into the fight with an enthusiasm and completeness that quite naturally suggested that public dialectics were to him a positive enjoyment. And no doubt at times it was so. Much humbler persons who have addressed great meetings on important and exciting topics know the sensations. When engaged in debate, apart from anxious or painful situations, I have no doubt he enjoyed the cut and thrust. But the real truth is that he was at heart a student, with an intense love of home life and its uninterrupted quietude. To emerge for Parliamentary or platform duties invariably meant effort and personal sacrifice. He strained the patience of colleagues and Whips by staying on at Hawarden till the last possible day, and by returning there before they granted leave of absence. During the sessions he made a point whenever possible of excluding public matters on Saturdays and Sundays. Every day he strove to keep two or three hours for general reading. He had his books in his private room at the House of Commons, and there over and over again I found him reading with his mind far away from political business. When free from official responsibilities, as in the Peelite days of the 'fifties, or for the two years before he renewed his activities in 1876, he was absorbed in non-political studies. Even when at full political pressure, he spent some six months of the year at Hawarden, where his seclusion was severely guarded by the family.

The idea that he liked and courted public

notice is absolutely wrong. It is the creation of those who wish to bring him into ridicule and contempt.

Frequently in later years I was urged by Whips and colleagues to press him to come to London earlier, to delay return to Hawarden, to make a speech here or there, and I did my best to persuade him. But it was most difficult. One day more at Hawarden, one day less of public turmoil, was precious to him.

To save subsequent repetition this digression is necessary. I pass on to our views of my father in our younger days.

What was he at home? My sister, Mrs. Drew, has given some brief recollections in her book,¹ otherwise no member of the family has gone into print on the subject. Therefore I venture to give some of my own recollections. Boys are usually shrewd judges of character. However this may have been in my case, I can say positively that sons and daughters alike all came to the same conclusions.

My brother Henry and I, being the youngest of the family, were as closely associated in the nursery and at school as we have been ever since. My words are also his. Brothers and sisters—seven of us—were in frequent lively dispute about many things. When we spoke of our father there was solid agreement.

It is difficult to describe our view of him in the earliest stages of recollection. Fear certainly there was not. Awe is not the right expression. Respect is too commonplace. Reverence came later. No doubt earliest impressions were largely induced by my mother. Access to him was rigidly limited by her to definite times. We grew to understand that he was much occupied and

¹ *Catherine Gladstone*, by Mary Drew (Nisbet).

must not be disturbed. We accepted that, and it was soon supported by the evidence of our senses. There were countless books, heaps of papers, much writing, and a constant incursion of impressive visitors. There was order and regularity. It was all quite outside our own lives, but we accepted it as in the natural order of things. But when we went to his room we found someone who thoroughly understood us, and gave himself to us while we were there. We had teaspoonfuls of black coffee, and rides on his foot slung over his knee while he sang "Ride a cock-horse to Banbury Cross". He showed us things, told us stories, measured and recorded our heights. But the supreme moment came when he carried four of us at a time—two of my sisters, Henry, and myself—on his back. There were little presents of things he did not want and we did. It was a daily treat. We were like little dogs who never resent exclusion but are overjoyed when they are allowed in. Our affection was secured. It was so complete and continuous that we gave very little trouble to him though much to others. On May 16, 1859, he refers to me in his Diary. "Herbert made me a good answer. I said, 'I am afraid you have given a good deal of trouble to everybody.' He replied with truth and acuteness for his age [5], 'I am sure I have not given much trouble to you.'" But once I gave him serious anxiety. In collecting *objets d'art* he frequently saw Mr. Benjamin, at the time one of the best-known London dealers. A big man, with a great bushy beard, he called one day at 11 Carlton House Terrace. Seeing me, then about five years old, and probably to please my father, he took me up and buried my face in his beard. I resolved that never should that horror recur. Soon afterwards he came again. From a back staircase I was on the watch.

I saw him and my father going upstairs. With a right instinct I ran into my father's own study and got under a sofa, and there I lay listening to every sound for four hours. Soon I was missed, and the house was searched from cellar to roof by the whole establishment. They never imagined I could be in the sanctum. Mr. Gladstone long afterwards told me of what they went through, and how he himself went twice to a big bath in a gloomy recess in case of an accident there. Unfortunately Mr. Benjamin, the source of trouble, declared he would not leave the house till I was found. Starvation was nothing to me. The sanctum was next to the front hall. At last my enemy had to go and I emerged. The relief was great and my explanation was fully appreciated. But the Chancellor of the Exchequer's morning had been destroyed and the whole house thrown into confusion for long hours.

He left discipline to my mother. She spoke seriously about my naughtiness, took a Japanese fan from the chimney-piece, and then, to my great surprise, inflicted a painless castigation—the only parental one of many that I underwent and the only one that didn't hurt. I did not mind it and it was quite just. Moreover, my father took care that Mr. Benjamin should never see me again. I was guilty but victorious.

Nevertheless, my mother, to whom we were all devoted, had worked it into me that I had given great trouble to my father and that it must not happen again.

As time went on we observed that his adjudications on our childish claims and petty disputes were always acceptable and fair. He induced the feeling that we should give as well as take. At the time, *circa* 1860, in the eye of the public he was *vir pietate gravis*. Not to us. There were no pre-



Catherine Gladstone

From a water-colour drawing by George Richmond 1843

cepts, no exhortations. He had won our absolute confidence as well as our affection. When he spoke to us it was in the way of information, illustration, and suggestion. Personal association with him was a joy, and perhaps the more so because of its limitation. The philosophy of limitation has been much neglected. "You can have too much of a good thing" is a suggestive saying, but it does not convey the positive merits of limitation. For the true understanding of limitation induces the sense of proportion. Limitation of access for us enhanced expectation, pleasure, and results.

It must be understood that really we were rascallions. Apart from hours of lessons and meals the time was our own. In the country, from the age of five or six, out of doors we were free. We had our own haunts and romances. We constructed secret places in trees, in holes in the ground, in the old castle. As we grew more active and enterprising we purloined planks from the timber-yard, straw from the stables, fruit from the kitchen-garden, candle ends from the pantry, anything we could lay hands on from the kitchen. After the kitchen-garden was locked up it was our happy hunting-ground. A bank outside the wall and a twelve-foot jump on to soft soil gave easy access. Old pear-trees were ladders of egress.

How could such things happen when we were absorbing our father's words? The explanation was that he knew nothing of these depredations, at any rate he said nothing. My mother was long-suffering with us and very rarely invoked the paternal authority. If my father had interfered it would, to our sorrow, have had its effect in stopping piratical pursuits. Whatever the reason, he never said anything, and we continued to be wild as hawks. Then occurred an event in our lives,

because one day we were summoned to our father's presence for the express purpose of receiving a jobation.

Towards the end of 1862 we resolved to have our own Christmas tree. At the top of a long, broad walk up the hill were semicircular grass terraces and in the centre a specimen *Wellingtonia*, about ten years old. We cut some two or three feet off the top, erected it under a holly-tree, and adorned it with tapers stolen from bedrooms, and other decorations. It was quite dark and we made things cheerful by a small bonfire.

Suddenly and most unexpectedly we heard the paternal voice out of the darkness—"What are you doing there?" "Nothing" we shouted as in absolute panic we bolted.

Next morning we were called in to the Temple of Peace.¹ To our immense surprise and relief he said nothing about the *Wellingtonia*, the bonfire, the tapers.

"What is truth?" Bacon knew, though he did not always practise it. We all of us know, even small boys. "Nothing." It was not the truth. A lie is a lie in small things as well as great. Serious and kindly words followed. We knew we were in the wrong. We had run away from him and denied patent facts. He passed by our atrocious action in mauling the *Wellingtonia*, and dismissed us with that twinkle in his eyes which we knew so well. We left full of gratitude, realising, and without further apprehension, the nature of a tribunal before which we could be arraigned for wrong-doing.

Amongst other things the incident had this effect. Our attention was fixed on our father's

¹ Mr. G's name for his room at Hawarden Castle. It contained about 10,000 books. The *Wellingtonia* ultimately recovered and shows a slight bend at the point of damage. It is now about sixty feet high.

views on truth. He had been to us its first great exponent. The moral aspect of a lie was explained in terms which appealed to us. It was unfair, weak, cowardly. Without truth there could not be trust. A lie was deceit and how could there be affection with deceit? He wished to trust us, but truth was necessary and a lie was wrong. He gave us the idea of responsibility and its obligations. When we left the room we had no sense of tribulation or that we had passed through an ordeal. We had expected perhaps severe correction. We just found a friend who understood us. Out of our own conduct he had brought to us the idea of a moral duty in life. This led me afterwards to "read, mark, and learn" Mr. Gladstone on the question of truth in public as well as in private life.

In household affairs, so long as I can remember, he took no part beyond keeping exact knowledge of general cost. My mother managed everything. There were few troubles, because she had all the qualities which lead servants to give long as well as faithful service. So she never worried Mr. Gladstone. But he always had much the same influence with the household staff that he had with us. It was strengthened by invariable personal courtesy, and an almost too great reluctance to cause them any trouble.

Religion he never thrust upon us. It was in the nature of things that we should go to Church twice on Sunday and attend prayers at home. One of my earliest recollections is the sight of his big Bible open on the dressing-table which he read daily as he dressed or undressed. Somehow the book fascinated me, and later I discovered that I had scrawled my name on the title-page in childish letters. It is now in my possession. As we grew older he would occasionally on Sundays give us and two of my sisters a Bible subject involving some

point of contradiction or difficulty. We wrote our answers and discussion followed. We knew he liked us to consult him on these matters and we sometimes did. Then he would use the opportunity offered by us of our own free will. We knew how he observed Sunday, but his invariable maxim as we grew up was "This is Liberty Hall." Consequently our own sense of freedom, and individual discretion, which he so openly gave us, led us as far as possible to do what we knew he wished.

In this book I do not touch upon the personal religion of my father. It must suffice to say here that it was the constant and absorbing passion of his life and the source of his strength.

When we went to school the contrast of other methods was extraordinary. It was a small preparatory school of an even then disappearing type. There was no appeal to reason and honour. We were beaten constantly, and to this day I can describe accurately the comparative pain of straps, riding whips, and sticks. We retaliated at once and became intractable. We aspired to be poachers and all the boys had cheap pistols. Powder—probably it was very bad—and caps in little tin boxes we surreptitiously bought in the village. With small stones for shot, when we thought it safe, we used to blaze away at small birds in the adjoining spinney. We plundered the kitchen-garden. We were in league with the cook, who made us pastry. That was discovered and the poor soul got the sack.

Round the playground were old wooden posts with cracks full of earwigs. With twigs we raked these out into the tin cap-boxes. We emptied the contents in the master's private rooms. I remember putting a boxful into his sister-in-law's work-basket.

Our master was a homœopath and sometimes gave us sugared pills, which we liked. When he was well away we went into his bedroom and ate many of those pills. Whether the absence of harmful results was due to the virtues of homœopathy or our leathery insides I cannot say.

We were little fiends in a constant state of retaliating revolt.

It was an attempt at education and rule by sheer coercion and it failed hopelessly. We hated it, but never complained. Then the joy of getting home. The contrast of the two methods of treatment was a lesson in life.

When we went to Eton we had our first lesson in the principles of economy. At the start our father gave us each 10s., which was increased every half (or term) by 1s. Little enough even then and nothing compared with the present practice. But we never questioned the rightness of the amount ; we had to study how far we could make it go. The gift was always accompanied by a little friendly advice, and my father pressed it on us that if we were in difficulty we should go to him. This was followed three or four years later by an annual allowance out of which we had to provide ourselves with certain articles of clothing. The result was that we kept out of financial difficulty and never once had occasion to go to him. What we owed to this most sound practice and advice, when he brought home to us from the first the value of money and the responsibility of its possession, was immeasurable.

A positive hatred of waste in all forms of wrong or useless expenditure was one of my father's leading characteristics. " Make the best you can of everybody and everything," he often said to us. A sentence at the summit of wisdom.

In all this we had daily before our eyes the

example of my father himself in practice. Of course he carried economy to points that in dimension and variety were quite amusing to us. Half sheets of notepaper—he always called them “orts”, neatly coiled bits of string, and the edging of stamps occupied a drawer. Carelessness in expenditure, down to the smallest coin, was odious to him. He gave largely and generously, but spent little on himself. He disliked eating or drinking more than the exact amount he needed, and he detested seeing food left on the plate or heel-taps. “Don’t take more than you want.” One night in the House of Commons we happened to be washing hands in the same lavatory. There was a serious drought. He blew me up for filling my basin, and then I saw that he had only got an inch of water in his.

For some time I thought that when he had a cold or some little indisposition, he took undue care of himself. He would stay in bed for a day or two and wrap himself up. Then I began to understand. He hated to be laid up. He looked upon it as sheer waste of time. So he attended almost meticulously to small indications of trouble exactly as a good engine-driver, on the slightest sign of trouble, will take measures to stop the mischief.

Ordinary people think life too short to waste time over trifles, though they waste it freely in all other directions. Not Mr. Gladstone. A principle was a principle and must be observed in small things as well as great. He had a habit, at one time acquired in office, of signing his name on the envelope and he did this one day on a post card to one of us. It was surcharged because the signature was not connected with the address. Here were two principles—economy in using both sides of the post card, and the rights of the public. He entered the lists against the Post Office and

over this halfpenny had quite a tough combat. He won, and since then the public has been able, if it likes, to write on both sides. He was extremely proud of this victory.

If his own carriage happened not to be available he would not go in cabs. Personally I cannot remember more than three occasions when he went in one. When he walked, the debit in time balanced with the credit to daily exercise.

His devotion to economy was best and most constantly shown in the saving of time. He was extraordinarily punctual on all occasions excepting luncheon. Luncheon was informal and did not matter. No one was kept waiting. To be too early was almost as much a fault as being too late. Conservation of time for the discharge of duties was one of the highest duties. In London, by stepping different routes from his house to his office, the House of Commons, or churches, he discovered the shortest and quickest. Everything that he did was planned with strict regard to the saving of time. From day to day, from 1825 to 1896, the Diary accounts for the day's work. But these traits never degenerated into fads. We observed these things, but he never talked about them in detail. They were familiar to us and to those, like his private secretaries who were in close touch, but not to others. Everything was on a system and planned. In most people this would have been tiresome. In him it was an interesting characteristic; it was part of him; we expected it and should have been amazed had there been any breach in it.

Whether there was a house party, or whether the family was alone, he was in everything the central figure. Apart from meals most of his time was spent in the Temple of Peace. But our constant endeavour was to draw him in the after-

noon and evening into our occupations and amusements. For he was the centre of life and fun. He was always the best audience to our theatrical or musical endeavours. When he gave himself to amusement, his keenness and laughter were infectious. He loved, after luncheon in the summer, half an hour of cricket round the hat. A hat was the wicket, half a dozen or so stood all round, and the batsman had to be quick in defence, was out if he hit over twenty-five yards, and if he missed the ball the wicket-keep of the moment could at once bowl him out from the other side. With tree cutting I deal later. Quite often he joined in round games after dinner, particularly a card game named "Commerce". He was far better than the best youngster at the fun of the thing. At times we broke into chorus. There was a refrain from an old English song which he always led. It ran thus as we sang it :

Now my heart goes pit-a-pat, pit-a-pat, Now my heart goes pit-a-pat, pit-a-pat,
 Now my heart goes pit-a-pat, pit-a-pat, and all—for Li-ly Ba-ker O!

Then in moments of special exhilaration, standing on the hearth-rug with arms round each other's waist Mr and Mrs. Gladstone sang swaying to the rhythm :

A rag-a-muf-fin hus-band and a ran-ti-po-ling
 wife, We fid-dle it and scrape it through the ups and downs of life

I think I must reproduce from Mrs. Drew's book his stanzas on "The Cook and the Captain". Miss Simmons was the Matron of Mrs. Gladstone's Convalescent Home at Mitcham,¹ and "the Captain" was a staff officer. One morning she said :

" Oh, William, only think, so exciting. The cook and the Captain are going to be married . . . Oh, of course, you are too full of Homer and your old gods and goddesses to care—stupid of me ! "

He went on writing and then handed her a paper :

The Cook and the Captain determined one day,
When worthy Miss Simmons was out of the way,
On splicing together a life and a life,
The one as a husband, the other as wife.

Fol de rol, tol de rol, fol de rol la

The Captain a subaltern officer made,
But the Cook ! *she* was monarch of all she surveyed.
So how could they hit it the marrying day,
If she was to order and he to obey ?

Fol de rol, tol de rol, fol de rol la

Miss Simmons came home and she shouted, " Oh, dear !
What riot is this ? What the d——l is here ?
If the Cook and the Captain will not be quiescent,
How can I expect it from each Convalescent ? "

Fol de rol, tol de rol, fol de rol la

Even Homeric theogony did not dim his sense of fun.

Sometimes we got him to read to us—always humorous things because we would not trouble him to read more serious literature. Dean Ramsay, the talks of Andrew Fairservice, or some gem of the kind from Walter Scott, the incomparable "Lord Mayor's Journey to Oxford", and so forth. His eyes danced, he choked with

¹ Now incorporated with the London Hospital.

laughter, so that the sight and hearing of him added infinitely to the attraction of what he was reading. We loved his coming out of that big life of his into our little one.

And we are told by *les critiques imaginaires* that he was solemn, unbending, domineering, pompous, pedantic, unsocial ! It is said that his temper was uncontrollable and that when thwarted it blazed into wrath. Quite grotesque accounts appear in Mr. Buckle's biography of Disraeli of Mr. Gladstone's outbursts of temper in the House of Commons.

It is not correct to say that his nature was excitable, because in the ordinary course of his public and private life he was singularly equable. He was never angry about small troubles and personal inconveniences. In private life he never lost his temper—in my experience not once. When roused on questions of principle he was formidable and efforts to move him by the frontal attacks of the unwary failed ignominiously. The "smoother" found himself deficient in argument. Excitability in the Cabinet may perhaps occasionally have been provoked by Lord Palmerston, but according to the evidence of his colleagues not when he was Prime Minister. It was in the House of Commons that at times, when tired or overwrought, he showed passion and even anger. But this was rare. The first speech I heard was on the Irish Church resolutions in 1867. For fourteen years, 1880–93, I watched him closely. "Baiting" Mr. G. was a well-known practice. No political leader, not excepting Peel, ever underwent attacks so bitter and continuous. Often vehement and impassioned, what may be called outbursts were remarkably few in face of provocation frequently intentional. Far more notable as constant characteristics were his

patience, restraint, and appreciation of anything that was praiseworthy in the speeches of opponents. Often when the House itself was wildly excited and personalities were flung about, he moderated the storm by perfect calmness and self-control in bringing the House back to essential points.

Under the pressures which make most of us irritable, he was sometimes formidable and strongly on the defensive. But he always listened to what we had to say.

One day, while acting as private secretary in 1889, I opened a letter from Dr. Kane, a famous Grand Master of the Irish Orangemen, and of great influence in Ulster. My father had recently spoken on the "in or out"¹ question in the Government of Ireland Bill. Dr. Kane in a courteous letter put a question on this, and said that the answer might materially affect his views.

I took all the letters in to Mr. Gladstone. Later in the day I went to the Temple of Peace and asked if I might see his answer to Dr. Kane. "Kane, Kane," he said; "I have had no letter from him. There", pointing to the floor, "are my letters" Looking through them I found a post card directed — Kanelk, Esq., with a somewhat curt reference to a speech.

Dr. Kane did not write clearly. He was a Clerk in Orders, and after his name always added Clk. I explained this. He had been worried on the particular subject by many correspondents and was "formidable" when I suggested that a letter in a more conciliatory spirit was desirable. However, he consented. I went back to my room, which was some way off. It

¹ Whether Irish members should or should not remain in the House of Commons

was a smoking den not frequented by him. Soon I heard a *knock* at the door. "Come in," I shouted, thinking it was the gamekeeper. In came Mr. Gladstone. He handed me the rewritten missive. Sitting at my table I read it while he stood by me like a schoolboy showing up his work. As I read, my heart sank. It would not do at all. But with a courage that till then I did not know I possessed, I told him what I thought. He took back his letter like an angel and left the room. Soon he came back with his third effort. "Will this do?" he asked. "Yes," I said, and the incident ended.

At times he was grave, emphatic, severe, indignant. He was always roused by injustice, by anything which was cowardly and bad, and particularly by any defence of what was bad. One day I asked him if it was really wrong to tell lies for some good motive. In certain cases he would not say it was—but "don't formulate a justification". Was that casuistry? It was not. The casuist would ever be ready to formulate evasion from a moral principle inconvenient to him. When we were in doubt about what course to take and asked his advice, he gave us guidance which experience shows to be most sound. "You will generally find that what you don't want to do is the right course." As Lord Morley says, he always looked for a principle.

Peel once advised him in the House of Commons to be long and diffuse. When he chose he could surpass even Asquith in lucid compression of masses of material. His expositions on our little affairs were luminously clear and short. We never had to ask him what he meant. Because he understood us, was always kind, patient, and helpful, and above all because he so often came down to our level and entered

into our amusements and fun, we adored him. Boys, indeed, are very sound guides to the main character of men. The old story shows it. "What do you think of your new master?" After reflection—"He is a beast, but a just beast." Free from prejudice, highly sensitive and with an honesty afterwards too often restrained by caution and custom, boys take fresh and true impressions. I give the exact impressions of my early days and they coincide with the impressions of every one of my brothers and sisters.

On my birthday in 1866 my father gave me Fox Bourne's *Memoirs of Sir Philip Sidney*.¹ On the title-page he wrote: "You cannot read too often the letter at p. 20. Its words are golden words." The letter, a fine specimen of Elizabethan literature, was written by Henry Sidney to his son Philip in 1566, and it represents so clearly and concisely the spirit and almost the terms of my father's domestic teaching that I make no apology for its reproduction as my last word in this chapter.

I have received [wrote Sir Henry Sidney] two letters from you, one written in Latin, the other in French, which I take in good part, and wish you to exercise that practice of learning often, for that will stand you in most stead, in that profession of life that you are born to live in. And since this is my first letter that ever I did write to you, I will not that it be all empty of some advices which my natural care of you provoketh me to wish you to follow, as documents to you in this your tender age. Let your first action be the lifting up of your mind to Almighty God, by hearty prayer; and feelingly digest the words you speak in prayer, with continual meditation and thinking of Him to whom you pray, and of the matter for which you pray. And use this as an ordinary act, and at an ordinary hour, whereby the time itself shall put you in remembrance to do that which

¹ Chapman and Hall, 1862.

you are accustomed to do in that time Apply your study to such hours as your discreet master doth assign you, earnestly, and the time I know he will so limit, as shall be both sufficient for your learning and safe for your health And mark the sense and the matter of that you read, as well as the words. So shall you both enrich your tongue with words, and your wit with matter, and judgment will grow as years growtheth in you Be humble and obedient to your master, for unless you frame yourself to obey others, yea, and feel in yourself what obedience is, you shall never be able to teach others how to obey you Be courteous of gesture, and affable to all men, with diversity of reverence, according to the dignity of the person there is nothing that winneth so much with so little cost Use moderate diet, so as, after your meal, you may find your wit fresher and not duller, and your body more lively and not more heavy. Seldom drink wine, and yet sometimes do, lest, being enforced to drink upon the sudden, you should find yourself enflamed. Use exercise of body, yet such as is without peril of your joints or bones it will increase your force, and enlarge your breath Delight to be cleanly, as well in all parts of your body as in your garments it shall make you grateful in each company, and otherwise loathsome Give yourself to be merry, for you degenerate from your father, if you find not yourself most able in wit and body and to do anything when you be most merry but let your mirth be ever void of all scurrility and biting words to any man, for a wound given by a word is oftentimes harder to be cured than that which is given with the sword Be you rather a hearer and bearer away of other men's talk than a beginner and procurer of speech, otherwise you shall be counted to delight to hear yourself speak. If you hear a wise sentence or an apt phrase, commit it to your memory with respect of the circumstance when you shall speak it. Let never oath be heard to come out of your mouth, nor word of ribaldry detest it in others; so shall custom make to yourself a law against it in yourself Be modest in each assembly, and rather be rebuked of light fellows for maiden-like shamefastness, than of your sad friends for pert boldness. Think upon every word that you will speak before you utter it, and remember how nature hath ramparted up, as it were, the tongue with teeth, lips, yea, and hair without the lips, and all betokening reins or bridles for the loose use of that member Above all things

tell no untruth, no, not in trifles. the custom of it is naughty. And let it not satisfy you that, for a time, the hearers take it for truth, for after it will be known as it is, to your shame: for there cannot be a greater reproach to a gentleman than to be accounted a liar. Study and endeavour yourself to be virtuously occupied so shall you make such a habit of well-doing in you, that you shall not know how to do evil, though you would. Remember, my son, the noble blood you are descended of, by your mother's side, and think that only by virtuous life and good action you may be an ornament to that illustrious family, and otherwise, through vice and sloth, you shall be counted *labes generis*—one of the greatest curses that can happen to man. Well, my little Philip, this is enough for me, and too much, I fear, for you. But if I shall find that this light meal of digestion nourish anything in the weak stomach of your capacity, I will, as I find the same grow stronger, feed it with tougher food. Your loving father, so long as you live in the fear of God,

H SIDNEY

CHAPTER II

SOME REFLECTIONS

WHEN we were discussing with John Morley what form the biography of Mr. Gladstone should take, I said that the desire of the executors was to publish a book as soon as it was reasonably possible on the personality of Mr Gladstone as a man. Other work could follow later. Morley said, "Why do you not write it yourself?" I did not think that this was irony, as it might well have been. It seemed to indicate that the limitation I had suggested was not sufficiently attractive. He had virtually finished a book on Irish affairs. Material then was ready to hand, and so probably the larger plan of weaving history into biography arose and took definite shape. But this expansive treatment led to contraction and omission of essential information on the private life.

When in days long gone by we discussed at Eton the character of a schoolfellow and someone said, "I know him at home," the speaker was at once admitted to be an authority. I have always regretted that Lord Morley could only find space for scanty references to domestic life. Mr. Gladstone is visualised as continually in the view of the public. Yet the greater part of his mature life was spent in the privacy of home. Occasionally he paid private visits, travelled, or had holidays at Penmaenmawr in which he delighted. Otherwise

when not engaged in political work he was at Hawarden. His privacy there, as I shall show, was hardly ever disturbed. It is clear to me now that few have realised the kind of man he was when free from the seriousness induced by public duties and responsibilities. In his studies of Napoleon and Bismarck Herr Ludwig dwells on the essential value of apparent minutiae in domestic life, flashes of thought on unimportant matters, habits, likes and dislikes and other things which escape historians and even biographers.

Therefore those who, without personal knowledge, read Lord Morley's biography cannot really know Mr. Gladstone "at home". I bear this in mind when I read descriptions of his character which assume that he had hardly any of the humanising and lighter qualities essential for personal attractiveness.

I have endeavoured to give some idea of what he was to youthful members of his family. *Mutatis mutandis* he stood in much the same relation to older people who knew him personally.

His capacity for making many friends was marked at Eton and at Oxford. Few men have found and kept for such long periods intimate friendship with both men and women in different ranks of life; friendships only ended by death.

In the course of his fifty years' sojourn at Hawarden many hundreds of men and women were guests at the Castle. Probably a majority of them had no previous acquaintance with Mr. Gladstone. Often they came in doubt and some trepidation. The result was invariable. They found in him what they had not anticipated—a genial, forthcoming host, paying great attention to what they had to say; light in hand, and never talking politics. Perhaps most exceptional men in like circumstances cannot get away from

what makes them exceptional. Mr. Gladstone could and did. At meal-time he did not lead the talk. Subjects and ideas came freely from anyone and were taken up. Sometimes visitors criticised the family for not giving Mr. Gladstone a sufficient chance. They did not know Mr. Gladstone as well as we did. Sometimes we had to head them off from boring subjects. I have visited many scores of country homes, but rarely have I come across any more free and easy than Hawarden. Mr. Gladstone loved being amused, and gaiety of mind—with all his seriousness of purpose—was part of his nature. Of course we all knew that when in the Temple of Peace he was busied heart and soul in the reading or work he was doing. But whenever he emerged, it was an invariable sign of fine weather.

It is often, and no doubt truly, said that he was much loved and much hated. He could hardly have been more loved but he would have been less hated had he been better known. “Hatred” in political life is largely a figure of speech, and when it has any reality it is usually due to personal rather than political matters.

I think it may be said with truth that personal animosity against Mr. Gladstone had not set in before 1876. His intense earnestness in public life and his religious strictness provoked the usual kind of irritation. His unconcealed hatred of the Opium Wars was resented. The Conservatives were wroth at his passage to Liberalism and opposition to unnecessary armaments. In all this there was no animus unusual in political life. Party rivalries became more intense in the “sixties”, and Mr. Gladstone’s first government in its later years lost popularity. But antipathy had not come. History can be written up to 1875 in an atmosphere quite free from political passion and pre-

judice. How different the twenty years following 1875.

If Lord Morley had found time and space to produce a study of Mr. Gladstone at home it would have gone far to explain the inwardness and evolution of his public actions. There was a great naturalness in all he did, a great simplicity, difficult to understand solely in the light of elaborate speeches and explanations of policy often so qualified and incomplete by hard necessity in public life. "Never explain," said Disraeli. That is a worldly maxim, cold and even brutal. Mr. Gladstone, from sheer simplicity and honesty of intention, explained perhaps too much and too often. In politics there is the inevitable clash between the "ought" and the "can". The resourcefulness and ingenuity of Mr. Gladstone's mind in its wrestling to reconcile what alone was practically possible with what in moral sense and on principle was right, led to frequent misunderstandings and seemed to exclude naturalness and simplicity as basic characteristics. The real man can only be understood in the light of the long private life, untrammelled by the unavoidable artificialities and restrictions of public life in positions of great responsibility.

In his home life, in daily action, in habits, in speech and thought, he had the frankness and candour and simplicity of a boy, so that, given the circumstances, what he said or did in ordinary daily life could be anticipated with confidence. The result was that at Hawarden no one looked on him as aloof, superior, inaccessible, or in the least terrifying. He dropped in to tea with the farmers, or visited pit-heads for a talk with the officials or miners like anyone else. He attended village entertainments and was the best possible audience. Success was certain with Mr. Gladstone

present. He was just *primus inter pares*, and everyone, the publican, the shoemaker, the postmaster, whoever it was, did not hesitate to speak to him about their own concerns and ask him about their little difficulties. There was a *bon-homie* about him which encouraged all classes of people to talk quite freely with him. He was at home with them and always ready for chaff. His very unconventional garb contributed to this. An old fellow, by name James Parry,¹ was a type of man well known to Dickens, not uncommon in villages sixty years ago. He blew the organ in church for years, did very occasional minor jobs, loafed about, and was a chartered beggar. His dress is better seen than described. But he was so shrewd and canny that he was on good terms with everyone. He would come up and remind you of a promise that you hadn't made, or invent something that he knew would be amusing. By this he made a steady income. He always looked out for Mr. Gladstone, who was intensely amused by him, and more than once went to tea with him.

There was no mistaking Mr. Gladstone's well-known figure in the neighbourhood of Hawarden. It was not so in London, for I have known of three individuals who were frequently taken for Mr. Gladstone by people who had only a general idea of his appearance. Perhaps the most striking of them was the well-known sportsman, Mr. George Hodgman. I quote the following passage from *Sixty Years on the Turf*, edited by C. R. Warner :

In my later years I have frequently passed for the Right Hon gentleman's "double", though I suppose two more mentally and politically opposite men never were born.

¹ His cottage was next the house where Emma Lady Hamilton was employed as a servant to a Dr. Thomas His true name was Reilly See illustration facing p. 64.



Photo, Clarence Hader

MR GEORGE HODGMAN

As my photograph precedes these pages, readers can judge of similarity between myself and the "Grand Old Man". Mr. Gale was always insisting on the likeness, and one evening at Waverley Station he and his friends passed the word round that Mr. Gladstone was travelling incognito. At first the crowd was incredulous, but soon people flocked round my carriage, and misled, perhaps, by the dim light of an autumn eve, thought I was Gladstone. The station was quickly in a ferment, and "Speech! Speech!" startled the porters at their work. "Speak," said Mr. Gale, as the train was on the move "Show yourself" So I thrust my head from the window with "Thank you, gentlemen! So-and-so will win the Cesarewitch"

Lord St. Davids called my attention to the photograph of Mr. Hodgman which, by the kind permission of Messrs. Grant Richards, the publishers, I reproduce.

When was the zenith of personal animosity? I say without hesitation 1879-80 and 1886. It was always most in evidence in the "smart" set. One day in 1880 I was riding slowly up Rotten Row, close to the railings. There was a group of fashionable people on the walk ahead. I did not know any of them. When I got alongside they lined up and hissed at me like cobras. It made me think I must be somebody. A few years later I was at the office at the foot of Vesuvius engaging a guide and had entered my name in a ledger. A lady and a gentleman followed, and the lady went to the desk to write her name. She saw my name, threw down the pen— "I am not going to write my name next to that."

Animosity against Mr. Gladstone beyond doubt was higher in the Eastern Question period than at any other time in his life. The Home Rule dissensions were wider and deeper, more painful to Mr. Gladstone because they separated him finally from many old and valued friends. But partly because of Mr. Gladstone's age and

partly because his opponents were at the time on the winning side, there was less violence of opinion. Because of the Eastern Question the doors of one or two country houses where I had been a constant visitor were closed to me. That did not occur over Home Rule. Anonymous letters are of no importance, but they are a measure of public excitement. They came in hundreds during the Eastern Question. Mr. Gladstone was so interested that for years he kept these letters in a special box. W. T. Stead¹ came to Hawarden after the 1880 election, and at his request Mr. Gladstone gave him the box.

I pursue these reflections in succeeding chapters. It is far from my intention to attempt anything of a biographical nature. Lord Morley has made that quite out of the question for me. Twenty-five years have passed since his book was published. It is easier to see where lie what I hold to be mistaken views about Mr. Gladstone. Mythical stories survive or have arisen, some ludicrous, some instructive. About these it is well to state the facts. Reflections take me to some aspects of Mr. Gladstone not directly dealt with by Lord Morley, and to some views and conclusions of my own.

¹ The well-known journalist

CHAPTER III

CREDULITIES

“Credulity is the common failing of inexperienced virtue”—
JOHNSON

ALL distinguished men are victims of story-tellers. Stories expand in the telling ; a generation passes, and myths are accepted because there is none to deny them on authority. Some come from friends, more from foes. They vary in sentimentality, absurdity, ill-will, and malice. Generally speaking, they are untrue. Dr. Jowett asked a friend to tell him all the whimsical stories which were current about him at Oxford. He was greatly amused by them, but said there was no truth in them with, I think, one exception.

Misconceptions are more serious, because they warp the view of character. They also usually come from gossip and loose talk. With some of these I will deal; but first I may perhaps dispose of some of the stories which seem to be still accepted by the credulous. Indeed, quite new ones still emerge. Here are three which I read last year in a well-known Sunday journal, each showing a certain animus :

Mr. Gladstone had no interest in inventions, but he had invented a system for warming houses which could never be got to work.

Because of his penurious habits there was never enough to eat at Hawarden.

Every night at 9.30 a curfew bell rang, and all lights had to be put out.

The truth is that Mr. Gladstone never invented or thought of inventing a warming system. There was plenty to eat at Hawarden, and if there hadn't been, Mr. Gladstone never meddled with household affairs. Lights were put out in the usual way, according to individual convenience, at all hours, and a curfew bell was never heard of. A good Sunday mouthful of unveracity.

Friendly intentions gave us trouble. A journalistic eye was caught by the attractiveness of one of Mr. Gladstone's grandchildren. At once she was christened Mr. Gladstone's favourite grandchild. It was not the fact, and it caused some tribulation, because there were many other grandchildren.

I never heard Mr. Gladstone say that he had a favourite anything. Apart from sporting vernacular, favouritism is either a vice or a folly. Whether applied in polygamous circles to wives, politically to ministers, educationally to schoolboys, or domestically to children, it is thoroughly bad for the favourite, disparages and is often meant to disparage others. To say you have a favourite quotation, dish, or colour abjures relativity, shows a want of imagination, and is in general avoided by the wise.

There was another myth, and it was harder to bear the results with equanimity. Some humorous newspapers gave out that "All hail the power of Jesus' name" was Mr. Gladstone's favourite hymn, to a tune which was also Mr. Gladstone's favourite tune. It was mischievous imagination, exasperating in results. Excursionists from Yorkshire, Lancashire, and Wales, all of them naturally musical, to please Mr. Gladstone invariably sang this hymn when they came to Hawarden. The tune is banal and drawling. We detested it, and for

years we suffered under it, but never in silence. These things may be trivial, but it is not possible to allow any musical person to imagine that the terrible tune was Mr. Gladstone's favourite.

Sometimes there was malice. Again and again it was stated that Mr. Gladstone was at heart, and had even become, a Roman Catholic. Hence followed the disestablishment of the Irish Church. But there was a worse insinuation. In 1864 Mr. Gladstone reduced the duties on light wines; consequently there was a large increase of French imports. Messrs. Gilbey were doing a great business in this. The story was spread about, and widely believed, that Mr. Gladstone was a partner in Gilbey's, or at least had some interested connection with that famous firm. After I entered Parliament I had myself frequently to contradict these false allegations. I have reason to think that the "Gilbey" invention still lingers.

I regret that truth compels me to give the facts about Mr. Gladstone's collars. Mr. Gladstone once referred to this—he seemed a little hurt—because he did not think his collars were high. But he told me that he once had some very high collars which he had worn. Judging by Watts' picture this must have been in 1860. Harry Furniss about 1880 probably took his cue for caricature from the picture, and from that time Mr. Gladstone was invariably caricatured in exceptionally high collars. Paintings and photographs show that his collars varied and were not unusually high. They were not comparable to the great dog collars which were fashionable in the 'eighties and 'nineties.

A story has recently been quite solemnly repeated about Mr. Gladstone's head.¹ It continually expanded and a new hat was required every year!

¹ *W. E. Gladstone*, by Osbert Burdett, 1928

His head in fact was unusually large. Mr. Gladstone once told me that he had asked for a hat in an Edinburgh shop. The hats brought were all too small, and the shopman then called for Aberdeen hats and one was found large enough. Mr. Gladstone was interested, and the shopman said it was well known that Aberdeenshire men had unusually large heads.

I think it is true that later in life than is usual the size of his head slightly increased, but certainly it had no bearing whatever on the purchase of hats. The truth must be told. Mr. Gladstone's hats were a constant source of perturbation to the family. He did not buy hats because of increasing measurement, but because those which he had were in a state of decrepitude. He very seldom had a new hat, but one I remember well because it realised our worst fears. It was an opera hat made of silk to enable it to do duty in the daytime. There was a working model in a well-known London shop window—the hat rose and fell. Mr Gladstone bought one. It was all right at night, but daylight revealed disordered silk and the lines of the springs within. It lasted an unfortunately long time. Mr. Gladstone was fond of it and we were not.¹

Another fable is that Mr. Gladstone made his secretaries—if they smoked—change their coats before they came to him. Nearly all his secretaries smoked in their offices, and we never changed our coats, because Mr. Gladstone never gave so much as a hint that we should.

He hated smoking himself, and if from politeness he took a cigarette when royalties dined with him it was a sight to see him holding it as

¹ To show that Mr Gladstone was on the verge of insanity, a story was bandied about that one day he bought some dozens of hats. The truth was that he went to a shop with Mrs Gladstone in Brighton and she ordered a large number of straw hats for her Orphanage.

far away as he could, and abandoning it after a few obviously uncongenial puffs.

I apologise for the length of my next myth. But it is an interesting illustration of how stories which are not true, given with what seems to be clear evidence, attach themselves to Mr. Gladstone.

Madame Novikoff was a Russian lady of good family, great ability, an ardent Slavophil, and a great admirer of Mr. Gladstone. She came to England in 1876 on the first of many visits. Eventually she took a house in London and died there in 1916. There is no foundation for the allegation that she was a Russian spy. There was no secret about her views. Openly and ardently she was Russian, and in communication with Prince Gortschakoff and other Russian statesmen. Her chief objects were to promote good-will and friendship between Russia and Great Britain, and to bring about the fusion of the Eastern Church with the old Catholics. Correspondence on the last subject led to personal interviews with Mr. Gladstone and subsequently to a prolonged correspondence on Eastern affairs.

On December 8, 1877, the famous Conference on the Eastern Question took place at St. James's Hall — since demolished — and Mr. Gladstone made an important speech.

In 1916—nearly forty years later—Madame Novikoff published a book.¹ She had attended the Conference. She records that it was nearly 8 P.M. when she left the hall ; that Mr. Gladstone saw her and gave her his arm ; took her down to Regent Street ; and escorted her to Claridge's Hotel. They must have arrived there at about 8.30. "He then strode off to keep his appointment to dine with the *Corps Diplomatique*."

Mr. Stead had already published in 1909 a

¹ *Russian Memories* (Herbert Jenkins, Ltd.).

life of Madame Novikoff in two stout volumes, *The M.P. for Russia*. He takes up the narrative (vol. I., p. 294) :

He [Mr Gladstone] arrived an hour late to find half the Ambassadors in London waiting for his arrival before they could sit down to dinner. "I am very sorry," said Mr. Gladstone on entering, "but I have not even had time to dress for dinner. You see, I have just been taking Madame Novikoff home to her hotel, which has caused me to be a little late "

This seems good enough for the student of history. The lady from memory gives her own experience in detail. The most brilliant journalist of the day enlarges on it in a serious publication. When I read these narratives I rubbed my eyes. Surely Mr. Gladstone could not have been guilty of such an affront to foreign dignitaries ? Could he have made so hopeless an excuse ? To many diplomats Madame Novikoff's name at the time was anathema. Are such dinners given by the Diplomatic Corps at which a chief guest is leader of the *Opposition*, in an acute stage of international controversy ?

Moreover, how could these things be, seeing that I myself was at the meeting and walked back with Mr. Gladstone to Harley Street ?

But so it was, and *we were alone*. I remember saying to Mr. Gladstone that it must have been a great relief to have got the speech over. "Yes," he said, "because it was a very difficult speech." Several people saluted him as we passed. He remarked on this, and said he was much more often recognised, presumably because he was getting old. "A great many of the police on duty now salute me." The meeting had closed before 8 p.m. The infallible record of Mr. Gladstone's own Diary shows that subsequently he dined quietly at the house of a friend.

Imagination, perhaps aided by a subconscious wish for importance, led to this curious invention. Mr. Stead was not a historian, and imagination enhanced the brilliancy of his journalistic work. Yet it is singular that his acuteness did not detect the impossibilities of the dinner scene.

The books to which I have referred only came to my notice in 1927. Otherwise this extraordinary story would have been accepted as true. Madame Novikoff very likely spoke to Mr. Gladstone when the meeting ended, though I don't remember it. But I know positively that from the Regent Street exit of St. James's Hall Mr. Gladstone and I walked home alone to 78 Harley Street.

Here is the latest canard, solemnly related in a responsible work so recently as 1923.

Sir A. Hardinge, in his *Life of Lord Carnarvon*, quotes from a letter of Carnarvon's dated June 11, 1882, "I hear on all sides the strangest stories of Gladstone."

This I can quite believe. About that time I was travelling—first class—on a Sunday. There were two other travellers, who began to tell each other stories about Mr. Gladstone. I listened for a bit, but at last I cut in and told them I could not allow their conversation to continue. And stopped it was. They were good fellows really, and we parted friends.

Sir A. Hardinge continues :

A curious one was told him [Lord Carnarvon] by Lord Cranbrook. Gladstone, it seems, had said a short time before to his brother, Sir Thomas Gladstone : "I have at least done this—I have unmasked and put down a social revolution in Ireland" "Is it possible," commented Lord Carnarvon, "that self-deception can go further? This from the man who first encouraged it and since has yielded to it over and over again"

This passage is taken from the official biography of Lord Carnarvon, and is written on the responsibility of its distinguished author. It is typical in the innuendoes it conveys against Mr. Gladstone. It savours highly of Russian scandal. Somebody not named told Lord Cranbrook, who told Lord Carnarvon, who wrote to someone, that Mr. Gladstone had made a certain observation. Quite good enough authority apparently for Sir A. Hardinge!

I cannot prove by evidence admissible in a court of law that Mr. Gladstone did not say what somebody alleged he said. I can find no trace in Mr. Gladstone's Diary of a meeting between Mr. Gladstone and Sir Thomas in 1882. When they met they never talked politics and were excellent friends. Supposing they had met and talked politics, Mr. Gladstone could not possibly have made so ridiculous a remark. The "it" in Carnarvon's letter obviously meant the Land League in Ireland. Mr. Gladstone was meticulously accurate in his language. The Land League was in full swing in 1880 before he came into power. Neither he nor anyone else unmasked a movement so openly and flagrantly proclaimed by its leaders. Mr. Forster had completely failed up to May 1882 to put it down. The Land Act of 1881 greatly weakened it, and eventually it merged into the Nationalist policy, which certainly was not put down by Mr. Gladstone. The statement attributed to Mr. Gladstone is inconsistent with well-known facts. It is founded on the flimsiest hearsay, and I am certain that it is untrue.

"*Self-deception can go no further,*" said Lord Carnarvon! Yet three years later, on sounder reasoning, he might be said to have "deceived" himself into thinking he could come to an agreement with Parnell in the empty house on Home

Rule. It is difficult to understand why Sir A. Hardinge admitted into his book this wholly unauthenticated and obviously ill-natured anecdote.

I must now review briefly a credulity of a different kind.

A new writer, in the search for novelty, has invented a theory that Mr. Gladstone was wholly without Divine guidance. On this he writes a whole book. In itself it is too absurd for serious attention. But Mr. Osbert Burdett is a clever writer, and his treatment of history has much merit. In no review of the work that I have seen has any adequate attention, or even any attention at all, been given to the theory on which the writer bases his whole conception of Mr. Gladstone's life-work. As Mr. Burdett's spicy deductions are certain to be quoted by Mr. Gladstone's detractors, I must demonstrate the unsubstantiality of what purports to rest on the evidence of Mr. Gladstone's Diary itself.

Lord Morley, in his preface, makes it perfectly clear that in his pages the detailed history of Mr. Gladstone as a theologian and churchman will not be found. With delicacy and tact he takes his readers to the threshold but does not enter the inner sanctuary of things that are spiritual. Of those things the Diary is the true record. It contains, in forty-one small volumes, brief condensed jottings of daily action, books read, and letters written. It was obviously not designed for publication. For the most part it consists of bare records of how time was spent. Mr. Gladstone described it as "jejune". Making full allowance for illnesses, there are approximately 25,000 entries between July 26, 1825, and December 29, 1896. Of these Lord Morley only quotes—usually in a sentence or two—from 450. These occupy some 30 pages out of 1411.

The Diary itself has only been read in its entirety by Lord Morley and myself. It has of course been accessible to surviving children. The smallness of the writing makes deciphering too laborious except for those possessing reasonably good eyesight. The entries at the close of each year, and sometimes on other occasions, are introspective and devotional. Some of them are of considerable length. They were untouched by Lord Morley, excepting brief quotations from five or six.

On the inner life of Mr. Gladstone the Diary remains a sealed book. Nevertheless, where Lord Morley forbore to tread, Mr. Osbert Burdett rushed in last year. Writing as if he knew the whole Diary by heart, he gravely propounds a theory, bizarre, and to those who personally knew Mr. Gladstone, quite contrary to the truth.

He quotes part of one of Lord Morley's half-dozen excerpts from devotional entries. It is only part of a part of the whole, and dated August 2, 1880: "O for a light from on high! I have no power, none, to discern the right path for myself." Mr. Gladstone was then twenty-one.

By this single sentence the author interprets the whole of his spiritual and political life!

In syllogistic form the argument is broadly this:

Without light there cannot be individuality, originality, initiative, principle, repose, Divine inspiration, and benefit of religion.

Mr. Gladstone once prayed for light to guide him in a particular decision.

Therefore he had no light throughout his life, and was deficient in all the greater qualities of mind and soul.

Mr. Burdett proceeds with his deductions:

"He [Mr. Gladstone] hardly knew what political

principle meant ; his want of inner light was compensated by his enormous susceptibility to outside influences." " His ideas invariably come from other people." " His energy served him better than inner light." He was an animated mask ; an intellectual weathercock. His ideas on morality veered " in proportion to his scrupulosity with the alterations in morality around him." " He was sincere in all his beliefs, if belief is the proper word for ideas that have no inner prompting." The *vox populi* was to Mr. Gladstone the divine voice (p. 80). He initiated nothing ; his home was the rostrum at Westminster ; repose was a kind of death ; he was crying for something to do (p. 122).

Eventually we reach the climax on the " inner void " " His copious flow of act and word resembled a whirlpool in which the greater the flow of water, the hollower is the centre of its circle. That inner void which distinguished him from his fellows he was desperately anxious to fill, but by the very law of its nature the more energy a whirlpool expends the more rounded is its inner emptiness." And so on with a reiteration which would have sent an early Victorian House of Commons to sleep. The metaphor surely came from the illustrated edition of Edgar Poe's *Maelstrom*, where the " egoist without an ego " can be seen gyrating round the great hollow centre.

In the course of this elaboration Mr. Burdett carefully leads his readers to suppose that he is well acquainted with the whole Diary. " His [Mr. Gladstone's] diaries seem designed for publication."¹

" It is true he longed for ' light,' but *he never prayed for perspicacity.*" [The italics are mine.]

¹ This is absolutely contrary to fact. Mr Gladstone had no such design. The brevity and dryness of the great mass of entries place publication out of the question.

How in the world does the author know? "Not even in his diaries could he contrive a personal or spontaneous note." This is quite untrue, as even Lord Morley's quotations show clearly enough. Alluding to an entry, the writer says, "The diary is terser than usual." As a matter of fact the entry is unusually long.

Yet Mr. Burdett had only seen 450 excerpts out of 25,000 entries in the Diary, and only six out of many hundreds devoted to spiritual life. In short, he makes it seem that he had studied the arcana of records which alone show the spiritual moods and life of Mr. Gladstone, to which he never had nor sought access.

Let us note the facts bearing on the single sentence—the thesis on which the whole portentous argument depends.

In 1830 Mr. Gladstone was twenty-one years old. His mind was torn day after day on the choice of a profession. He himself felt called to take holy orders. The authority of his father was in strong opposition. What was his duty? He is not conscious of Divine guidance. The youth of twenty-one prays for Divine light.¹

It is on this basis alone that he is stigmatised for the next sixty years as a man devoid of inner light in everything human and divine, and gyrating helplessly in a void only made greater by the efforts of sheer physical, but never moral, strength.

It may be that I am wrong to take Mr. Burdett seriously.

¹ So did Newman. "Lead, kindly Light, amid the encircling gloom."

CHAPTER IV

MISCONCEPTIONS

(a) *Solitariness*

LORD MORLEY refers to Bulwer Lytton's horoscope of Mr. Gladstone.¹ Of this he says, "One curious sentence declares Mr. Gladstone to be at heart 'a solitary man'. Here I have often thought that the stars knew what they were about." A suggestive comment; yet it may convey a wrong impression. It is true that daily Mr. Gladstone passed into a region of thought beyond the human eye. Here, maybe, he had a sense of solitariness in the contemplation, "aloft alone," of his own inner life. This, I think, was in Lord Morley's mind.

In temperament he was the reverse of a solitary man, apart from the special hours of meditation and study. He did not like being, and rarely was, alone. Companionship and, what is even more important to a man whose mind is engrossed in work, the sense of companionship, was essential to him. That was why he always wished to have as many of us as possible at home. He delighted in congenial company.

A recent writer said he was not at ease in the society of men. Quite untrue. In 1890 he was a guest at All Souls, Oxford, for a week, and he

¹ Morley's *Life of Gladstone*, vol. 1. p. 197.

spoke of it as one of the happiest times in his life. He had rooms in College and the Fellows assembled in hospitable force to entertain him. The College history of this week is told by one of them in a little book.¹ The writer, who describes himself as an intolerant Tory and a strong Erastian, sums up his impressions :

Yet I think that two things struck me even more than the spell which he cast—namely, Mr Gladstone's beautiful simplicity and his perfect courtesy. He was much “the finest gentleman I ever met”, and the result was that everyone, down to the humblest College servant, felt the better for being in his presence

Oxford, its associations, surroundings, and company, was always in his heart. Indeed, at one time he thought of taking a house there for his last years. He loved the seclusion, order, and regularity of residence in college. For the same reason life on board ship always attracted him. He often dined at Grillions, and his weekly breakfasts for years gave him enjoyable opportunities of meeting famous men.

In society, whether of men or women, Mr. Gladstone was perfectly at his ease, whether his mood was grave or gay.

Let us take him at a disadvantage. He strongly disliked a teetotal dinner and smoking ; and looked askance at racing and its concomitants.

Sir Wilfrid Lawson invited him to a political dinner party. At the time he had throat trouble and could not address large audiences. Dinners at private houses were occasionally given to enable him to speak without much effort. The dinner was strictly “dry”. However, he rose well to the occasion and made an admirable speech.

¹ *Mr Gladstone at Oxford, 1890*, by C R. L. F. (Smith Elder and Co., 1908).

Next morning I asked him what he drank. "Water," he replied rather gruffly, "and precious little of it."

Once as guest of the Chairman, William Woodall, he dined with the Savage Club. There were clouds of tobacco smoke. He said that on everyone's plate there was a little mountain of ash and cigar ends. He loathed tobacco. Yet he never enjoyed a dinner more. He made a delightful speech, and told me that the Savages were the best audience he had ever spoken to.

Lord Rosebery, with a stroke of humour, asked him to meet a race party at The Durdans—all men. Henry Chaplin, who was present, gave me an account of this. There were, I think, about a dozen guests, every one of them, excepting Mr. Gladstone, being a racing man. Before Mr. Gladstone came they were discussing his advent and rather wondering how they would get on. "At any rate," they said, "we shall be up to him about horses." So at dinner up came the subject of horses. But it so happened that Mr. Gladstone had just been writing on the Homeric horse. This had led him to an intensive study of the evolution and distribution of the Perissodactyles. So at The Durdans Mr. Gladstone was well up with the field. Chaplin told me that the whole company was delighted with him, and that they had great fun.

At Hawarden we took it as a matter of course that Mr. Gladstone worked or read in the Temple of Peace all the morning, for a short time after luncheon, and between six and eight. But he was so thoroughly sociable that our only complaint was that his hours of work were always too long. While he worked we all had free access to his library for the purpose of reading. The only condition was silence.

There was a side of him which may account for Lord Morley's remark.

Nowadays personal relations are so free and easy that a man if not ready to rub shoulders is thought a stiff outsider. It was very different in Mr. Gladstone's early days. Close friendships were not so familiar, there was much formalism, and ceremonial politeness. People stood far more on their dignity.

Once Mr. Gladstone rather growled when I asked him to see an unexpected visitor at Hawarden. He said that all sorts of people claimed the right to see him, and he told me of this incident. Finding himself in the neighbourhood of Drayton, he called on Sir Robert Peel, of whose Cabinet Mr. Gladstone was at the time a member. Peel would not see him because he had not been advised of his coming ! The manners and customs of the day bred a certain personal aloofness.

Writers not infrequently and almost in the same breath accuse Mr. Gladstone of having an insatiable lust for publicity, and of being unsociable and reserved in the lobbies of the House of Commons. In the last charge there is an element of truth.¹ Undoubtedly on duty in the House of Commons he was too serious for the ordinary mortal, and occasionally lost opportunities of personal contact with his followers. I own I sometimes wished for the lighter vein in which he excelled. We got it now and then. Once the three members of the Fourth Party, Churchill, Wolfe, and Gorst, in their haste to make points against the Government, in succession made clever speeches which in their sequence were mutually destructive. Then Mr. Gladstone rose and quoted Joel : "That which the palmerworm hath left

¹ Mr Gladstone's sight was not good and he did not recognise faces easily. This was not always realised.

hath the locust eaten ; and that which the locust hath left hath the cankerworm eaten ; and that which the cankerworm hath left hath the caterpillar eaten " (Joel i. 4). The House was delighted and the Fourth Party subsided. On these occasions Mr. Gladstone's twinkling eyes and play of features captivated the House. Too often his simplicity made him take his opponents too seriously, when humour and banter would easily have disposed of them. But intense earnestness in public affairs made Mr. Gladstone what he was, and though weaker brethren might sigh for the lighter mood they knew it was the sincerity of Mr. Gladstone's seriousness in public affairs which won and held their confidence.

Away from duty, at home, in recreation, or in society his natural mood was cheerful, gay, and even boyish. He could always find subjects of common interest, and he was equally at home with farmers, theologians, workmen, professors, artists, sportsmen, " babes and sages ".

(b) *The Platform in 1879-80*

I pass now to a very common charge against Mr. Gladstone. It has given rise to a general belief that he was the first leading statesman to use the platform instead of the House of Commons for political purposes. He is pictured as having made innumerable misleading speeches on every possible occasion in Midlothian. By that unwholesome and unscrupulous method he is supposed to have blinded the eyes of the people to the virtues of Lord Beaconsfield's Government.

Historically, this is not true. Cobden and Bright had accustomed men to mass meetings for political objects. But the people, whose interest in politics was ever on the increase, had no great

leaders of their own. Indurated to their own conditions of life, their ideas were mainly in the direction of the franchise and education. They were on the look-out for men who could give powerful expression to them. The rejection by the House of Lords of the Paper Duty Bill¹ in 1860 produced the first great spontaneous manifestation of popular sentiment.

Mr. Gladstone countered the Peers by including all Budget proposals in one Finance Bill. When he went that year to Newcastle no man was more astonished than he was at his reception. People had realised what the removal of the duty meant for them. There was deep wrath at the interference of the House of Lords, and a tremendous reception was given to the man who was fighting their battle. The procession of steamers, with guns firing, sirens blowing, huge crowds massed on both sides of the river, was no got-up spectacle. Men saw in Mr. Gladstone a statesman who understood what they wanted and could speak for them. There were great meetings and many speeches.

Then followed the agitation for reform, and again Mr. Gladstone took a leading part. My earliest political recollection is the immense crowd at Carlton House Terrace in 1866. It filled the whole space between the Athenæum and the United Service Club. Again it was spontaneous. Mr. Gladstone himself was absent, but on request of the police Mrs. Gladstone appeared on the balcony and the multitude dispersed. The Reform Act made the platform a necessity for both parties in the election of 1868. Political organisation of the newly enfranchised voters began. Public meetings for political propaganda were common. In South Lancashire in 1868—after his defeat at

¹ The Bill repealed the excise duty on paper.

Oxford—Mr. Gladstone made fourteen speeches, averaging an hour in length, in twenty-seven days. But he was only doing what everyone else was doing. It was ten years before the Midlothian campaign.

In 1876 it is said that Mr. Gladstone roused the country. The fact was, as he himself said, he found the country in advance of him. Mr. Disraeli's policy divided his own Cabinet and angered the country. Mr. Gladstone's task was to instruct and guide the popular mind against that policy.

Mr. Buckle says : “ The outpouring this year [1879] was immense on both sides. All other efforts, however, paled beside Gladstone's Midlothian pilgrimage of passion with its herculean programme. . . . ” “ It certainly is a relief ”, wrote Lord Beaconsfield, “ that this drenching rhetoric has at last ceased. ” “ I have never read a word of it, ” he added nonchalantly. Perhaps this explains why he appeared, right up to the election, to be quite unaware of the strength of the case against him.

Mr. Buckle only follows others in attempts to belittle and discredit the Midlothian campaign by exaggerations and ridicule. Let us come to the real facts.

Mr. Gladstone did not open his attack till November 24, 1879. He arraigned the whole policy of the Government, and of course had to visit every corner of the constituency. Yet the number of speeches was certainly below that of any candidate contesting an important county constituency even in those days. So interested was the country that every word he said was fully reported in every leading newspaper. That was the rock of his offence. In power and argument his opponents could make no headway against him. They were

not deficient in oratorical power. Their deficiency lay in their case.

During this first visit in November Mr. Gladstone made five principal and two secondary speeches. *En route* he spoke a few words at half a dozen stations where great crowds had assembled. Had such experience fallen to the lot of Conservative orators, Lord Beaconsfield would have exulted in the spontaneous testimony of the people to the wisdom and success of his policy!

During the election itself, in March 1880, in the course of about three weeks Mr. Gladstone made fifteen speeches besides again giving the few words at stations *en route*. Once or twice, for example at Perth, these little addresses extended to some ten minutes. It was a moderate allowance, as every county candidate with any experience well knows. I made twenty-six more or less feeble orations at the same election in a fortnight's time. Lord George Hamilton, my successful opponent, in a longer time made more.

Summing up—in the course of his Midlothian candidature Mr. Gladstone made twenty-two speeches, and about a dozen quite short addresses *en route*. He had to survey six years of Tory government. He had to wipe out a large hostile majority to secure victory. The wonder is that he was able to cover so wide a field in so limited a number of speeches.

The nonsense spoken of passion, deluge, interminable verbosity, is only the stuff meant to hide what was Mr. Gladstone's real strength—the weakness of Lord Beaconsfield's case.

(c) Lord Beaconsfield and Mr. Gladstone

In forming opinions on the personal relationship of two great political opponents too much

stress should not be laid on words delivered in polemical heat, whether used in public or in private. Every keen-souled politician of even average intelligence knows his liability to be carried away at times by emotion into the use of words which in cooler moments surprise him. It is easy for those to be moderate in language who are without the fire of enthusiasm, who treat human affairs as coolly as they transact the ordinary business of everyday life.

Leaders, if they are competent to lead, are of different mettle. The power of self-command is a great attribute, but the public is not inspired by a man constantly under frigid self-restraint. They like to see the man as he really is, and saying what he really has in his mind at the time. They love hard hitting. The outbursts of both Mr. Disraeli and Mr. Gladstone are illustrative of their character, and the picturesqueness of the long duel would lose much of its attractiveness if they had been unuttered. Considering diversity of gifts, racial qualities, and training, what is really remarkable is not so much the nature of the more personal blows but the fewness of them during the forty-five years in which they were more or less in opposition to each other. In fact, words really bitter in antagonism were almost wholly confined to the Eastern Question period after 1876 when political temper was at white heat.

There was a notable difference in method of personal attack. Mr. Gladstone used strong and provocative language against Mr. Disraeli's policy and actions ; Mr. Disraeli's attacks were constantly and definitely personal.¹

¹ It is curious to note how critical writers so often attack not Mr. Gladstone's policy but his personal reputation and his supposed faults of character. The natural inference is that, apart from Egyptian affairs, they find the bulk of Mr. Gladstone's political work unassailable.

What was Mr. Gladstone's personal feeling towards Lord Beaconsfield? It is supposed to have been whole-hearted dislike, amounting to hatred, which became a directing motive explanatory of his policy. This, I believe, is an error

I can give evidence from inside, for I was living at home with Mr. Gladstone during these crucial years.

It is true that apart from moralities generally accepted, patriotism, and public well-being, Mr. Gladstone and Disraeli had little in common. After 1858 they sat on opposite benches, and temperamental divergencies accentuated party controversies. Strongly and sometimes fiercely as Mr. Gladstone disagreed with Disraeli on public affairs, on no single occasion was his policy initiated or even influenced by personal feeling

Very frequently Disraeli was the subject of family talk. Mr. Gladstone never qualified his political opposition, but never once did he say a harsh or unkind word on Disraeli's personal and private character. In those days there was an aloofness between political opponents which only began to break up in the last twenty years of the nineteenth century. There were some exceptions. There was much common ground between Lord Salisbury and Mr. Gladstone. But visits to Hatfield were suspended in the heat of the Eastern Question. I remember that Mr. Balfour, who was a personal friend, did not come to Hawarden at that time, because of his close association with Lord Salisbury.

Disraeli's attacks on Peel were to Mr. Gladstone anathema. Even long association in Conservatism rarely brought them together. Their ways of thought did not run parallel. Early rifts widened into chasms.

In the House of Commons there was, and

probably still is, a spirit of camaraderie which almost unconsciously binds its members together by the sense that, whatever their differences, they are there for a common purpose. Sometimes there is a truce owing to some great national occasion. Or it may be some settlement by agreement as on the County Franchise in 1884. On these occasions my note was that it was a sort of holiday time, hailed with relief, and party politics were for a time forgotten. In a more marked and serious form this was so when the War broke out in 1914. It is a condition of mind characteristic of British political life, which would be intolerable without it.

Mr. Gladstone had a great reverence for the House of Commons, and was susceptible to this spirit of camaraderie. Moreover he was freer from personal rancour and ill-will than any prominent politician I have known, with the exception of Lord Oxford, Mr. Balfour, and Lord Hartington. In his letters and diary there is no indication of personal animosity against anyone.

He was certainly fascinated by Disraeli's extraordinary cleverness—I think more than he cared to admit. In 1878 he said that it was his duty to counterwork by day and night what he believed to be Lord Beaconsfield's purpose in supporting the integrity of Turkey. It has often been said that this showed personal animus. That was not the case. In a sense it was a personal attack, because Mr. Gladstone held firmly that the policy of the Government was Disraeli's own policy which he was forcing on at any rate some reluctant colleagues. I often heard him say that he wished to strengthen the Salisbury-Derby-Carnarvon element in the Cabinet. Therefore he had a definite political purpose in attacking, not the Government as a whole but the Prime Minister who was specially

and personally responsible. He saw in Disraeli's policy a repetition of the old Crimean mistake for which he had himself been responsible. How correctly he judged the situation in the Cabinet Mr. Buckle has clearly shown. As the bag-and-baggage policy won the day at Berlin and Lord Salisbury subsequently admitted the error of the Government, there is no possible reason for attributing to Mr. Gladstone any other motive for his policy than the liberation of the Balkan provinces from the Turkish Government.

Between two such combatants there must have been a mutual if unacknowledged feeling that each gained distinction from the other. For Lord Beaconsfield's brilliant abilities, his power of wit and sarcasm, his unyielding courage, his extraordinary resourcefulness at the most difficult times, his patience and self-control, Mr Gladstone's admiration was unqualified. When he spoke of him he always spoke reflectively and very quietly. He strongly disliked rankling animosities. His attachment to Lady Beaconsfield and his letter to Lord Beaconsfield on her death, with the reply to it, show that behind the clash of politics there was between them a genuine meeting-point of human sympathy. He drew a great distinction between public policy and personal relations. In the heat of the Eastern Question there is this entry in the Diary:

May 21, 1879 Afternoon tea with Lady Derby. Found myself face to face with Lord Beaconsfield and this put all right socially between us to my great satisfaction

It was an opportunity for personal and friendly intercourse which he welcomed. He could not have written these words had he been in the least conscious of ill-will or unfriendliness. This is

borne out by his great concern and actions at the time of the last illness.

March 29, 1881. Went up to inquire for Lord B. Lord Barrington reported him better. May the Almighty be near his pillow.

March 30 Went up again to inquire for Lord B. Saw Lord B [arrington] and Dr. Kidd The better accounts confirmed

April 19 Easter Tuesday At 8 A.M. I was much shocked on opening a telegram to find it announced the death of Lord Beaconsfield $3\frac{1}{2}$ hours before The accounts 24 hours ago were so good. It is a telling touching event. There is no more extraordinary man surviving him in England, perhaps none in Europe I must not say much in presence as it were of his urn. I immediately sent to tender a public funeral

Then there are these words from the memorial speech in the House of Commons :

There were certain great qualities of the deceased statesman that I think it right to dwell upon . . . qualities immediately connected with conduct—with regard to which I would say, were I a younger man, that I should like to stamp the recollection of them on myself for my own future guidance.

These extracts, each in its own way, contradict the idea of personal ill-will and show that Mr. Gladstone's personal regard for Lord Beaconsfield was definite and real. I can see no justification for arguing otherwise from sentences culled from speeches made under intense feeling in the stress of public debate. I never saw him more moved than he was when Lord Beaconsfield, under a misapprehension, charged him with having used a word which was personally offensive.

When he talked of Disraeli in private he often gave me the impression of a personal regard for the man with whom he had crossed swords on innumerable occasions and with varying results. He certainly had that respect and admiration which all great fighters have for powerful opponents.

CHAPTER V

RECREATION AND OCCUPATION

" Ease is the most that can be hoped from a sedentary and unactive habit ; ease, a neutral state between pain and pleasure. The dance of spirits, the bound of vigour, readiness of enterprise, and defiance of fatigue, are reserved for him that braces his nerves, and hardens his fibres, that keeps his limbs pliant with motion, and by frequent exposure fortifies his frame against the common accidents of cold and heat.

" It is too frequently the pride of students to despise those amusements and recreations, which give to the rest of mankind strength of limb and cheerfulness of heart."—JOHNSON's *Rambler*, ii. No. 85.

RECREATION to Mr. Gladstone was, speaking quite generally, change of occupation. Always provided that the change was from and not to politics. He turned to Homer, theology, and literature, with the interest and zest refreshing to mind and body. Yet physical exercise was essential to him, and he liked it hard.

He liked travelling, but he was not a great traveller. I think he felt it involved too great a change of habits. At the educational value of travelling he looked askance, and with reason. The average traveller brings back little of interest, quite forgetting that education is more necessary for travelling than travelling for education. Often he comes back with preconceived errors increased by an inveterate habit abroad of looking at things and people through insular spectacles. As Gibbon says, " The precious and indispensable requisites of foreign travel are age, judgment, a

competent knowledge of men and books, and a freedom from domestic prejudices."

Yet, when Mr. Gladstone did go abroad he went *con amore*. His Diary becomes a journal, and it shows how intensely he enjoyed beauties of scenery and architecture, ancient buildings, and intercourse with interesting people. Travel for him was limited because of other demands on his time. Perhaps the sense of trouble and discomfort imbued from earlier experiences was not wholly allayed by the comforts of railway developments.

It is difficult to realise now what travelling meant in the old coaching days. Mr. Gladstone worked from London as a base. Newark, his constituency, required attention, and his home life was for a long period divided between Hawarden, Liverpool, and Fasque. He was occasionally in a coach or chaise which upset, but escaped injury.

It would be easy nowadays to go from Hawarden to Fasque (in Kincardineshire) in nine hours from door to door. From Mr. Gladstone's Diary I give this journey with Mrs. Gladstone, two small children, and servants in 1843.

Aug 21. Started at $2\frac{1}{4}$ p.m. for Liverpool Business there and left by steamer *Princess Royal* at 7. Very rough night. All sick, I grievously so, but C. [Mrs Gladstone] to whom it was of importance D[eo] G[ratias] comparatively little.

Aug 22. Greenock at 1, Glasgow at 4. Excellently accommodated at the Wellington Hotel, Queen Square.

Aug 23 $6\frac{1}{2}$ a.m. to $6\frac{1}{2}$ p.m. our whole party made a most prosperous journey (the day being delightful) to Fasque. Almost all outside which gave the children space.

Say fifty-two hours in all in comparison with nine.

Then comes the return to London—which can now be done with every comfort in ten hours.

Oct. 11. 9½ to 3½ Fasque to Dundee. Started in rain which grew to storm and leaving with the wind N on the coast we found it E. With West and the children we determined on the undertaking, sufficiently formidable for them all, to post and mail it. They got a little rest in Dundee and we started at 10 P.M., the storm continuing. Travelled all night.

Oct. 12 Arrived at Edinburgh 5½ [A.M.]. Off at 6½ by Defiance [mail] to Carlisle. 94 or 95 miles. Arrived at 3½. Off again by mail at 6½. Just missed the Cathedral prayers at Carlisle. Reached Lancaster at 1 A.M. C was much fatigued; Willie but little, Agnes a wonderful traveller.

Oct. 13 8½ A.M. to 9½ P.M. by railroad to London. To-day's work was comparatively easy

In all 59½ hours, six times the length of the modern journey, and accompanied by all sorts of discomfort.

In the following year he records a trial trip on the South-Eastern.

1844. July 31. London Folkestone 80 miles 2½ hours Tunbridge to Ashford 20 miles in 25 minutes Last stage astonishing

His vitality was so great that these journeys do not appear to have tried him. His only complaint was that this kind of travelling interfered with thinking as well as reading.

In recreations his life in the country, while arranged to give enough time for reading, was much the same as that of other young men of the day. His indoor games were billiards, whist, piquet, and chess. He was fond of chess, but eventually gave it up as too exciting and devouring of time. The Diary shows that he worked freely with the children in making snow men and mountains, and joined in cricket and otter-hunting. He loved long mountain walks. He rode constantly in the country and London. I think from the number of times his horse came

down that he was an indifferent horseman. In 1863 his horse bolted in Rotten Row, and at the upper end he had a severe fall, cutting his head badly. But he was never discouraged.

He did much shooting, especially at Fasque, and liked it chiefly because it took him on the hills. He looked upon himself as a poor shot. But he notes on one occasion that he had a bag of 46 for 90 shots, which is not so bad. After he blew off the index finger of his left hand in 1842 from not uncocking the undischarged barrel, he continued to shoot in a philosophic spirit, but gradually gave it up in the pressure of public work. His last shot was on March 4, 1870, when he was staying with Lord Granville at Walmer Castle. In his Diary he says, "Missed two rooks with a rifle".

Rowing was his chief recreation at Eton, and subsequently whenever he got a chance. He was frequently at Cliveden. Occasionally Henry and I went from Eton to Cliveden from Saturday to Monday. They were red-letter days.

The Duchess of Sutherland, famous for her beauty and culture, rather overawed us. One day at dinner she asked me (I was about thirteen) if I liked poetry, to which I suppose I answered Yes. "Do you remember Pope's beautiful lines which begin, 'On her white breast a sparkling cross she wore'?" I had hardly heard of Pope, but from that time I never forgot that line.

A boat was always ready for Mr. Gladstone, and I can still see him sculling off up river.

My brother Stephen's four sons were great oarsmen. They were all in the Eton eight, and Albert, the eldest, rowed in the Oxford boat for four years, rowing stroke in three of them. This family aptitude came perhaps from Mr. Gladstone

Music was almost a passion; his fine baritone

voice was much in demand. He worked at thorough bass, and on three occasions notes in the Diary the composition of anthems. Unfortunately we have not been able to trace these. Once he told me that he found thorough bass the most difficult subject he had tried to master. At home he frequently joined with us in part-singing, but the only solo I ever heard him sing was the short bass solo in Mazzinghi's glee "The Wreath". He went frequently to the Opera, and was an enthusiastic admirer of Jenny Lind. That great artist, after she became Madame Goldschmidt, led the sopranos in the Bach Choir for some years. She came to see Mr. Gladstone, I think in 1877 at 73 Harley Street, and I heard her sing several songs wonderfully, though she was then approaching sixty years of age.

In short, Mr. Gladstone's recreations were not different from those of other young men, but in his case subject to a stricter limitation of time.

Wood-cutting, which became a habit of later life, began after he had given up shooting. He loved trees though he had little knowledge of them ; but he had a sound forester's eye. He disliked decaying or unsightly trees, and he hated to see trees spoiling each other's opportunities. Forestry had long been neglected at Hawarden, so he set to work. In thirty years' time, though we had cut down thousands, there seemed to be more trees than ever. No important tree was condemned without serious debate. Ruskin and Millais delivered verdicts against trees which had long been under consideration.

Mr. Gladstone was quite irritated when in a *Punch* cartoon he was drawn as cutting trees a foot or two from the ground. For economy and sightliness the rule was to cut to ground level wherever possible. It meant additional labour,

for the girth of a large tree which is, say, 12 feet at 3 feet from the ground may easily be 18 feet or more at ground level. But this did not matter, as we were out for exercise.

Mr. Gladstone was not a first-class woodman, chiefly because of his gun accident, which prevented him from working left-handed as well as right. But he worked with intense energy. In his old age this was risky, and we had various manœuvres to make him take a rest.

My brother Willy was an expert—his work was always beautifully neat. We despised the use of a cross-saw unless it was essential.

Tree-cutting is not dangerous provided some obvious precautions are taken. But there were one or two shaves. Once Mr. Gladstone and my brother Willy were cutting a lime which had a heavy lean on a steep slope. Henry had gone up to fix a rope. It was a large tree, apparently sound, but in fact its whole centre was rotten. It fell suddenly, without warning. Henry, about 30 feet up, was on the under side, but, as the tree fell, cleverly managed to slip round to a branch on the other side. He held on like a leech and had a very fortunate escape, because the bough he had been standing on was smashed to pieces. On another occasion Mr. Gladstone and I were cutting a beech over 100 feet in height. The tree being well balanced, began to fall slowly. Looking up I saw to my horror a large bit of dead wood, broken off as the top of the beech cleared itself from other trees, falling right over where Mr. Gladstone stood. It was too late to give any warning. The bough just missed him and smashed to pieces on the ground. This taught us to stand clear in such cases.

It brings to mind a queer incident recorded by Mr. Gladstone. In the Eastern Question time he

was walking up Regent Street where some building operation was going on. A brick fell a few inches from him and broke on the pavement. Accident or design ? He didn't trouble to inquire.

We were all pretty good at the work. On one gigantic ash Mr. Gladstone and all four sons were cutting at the same time, which at any rate shows confidence in one another.

It was grand exercise and we had great fun over it. Of course the caricatures of Mr. Gladstone were endless. Here is a recent one in words :

It was never very difficult to coax him to speak, and the pilgrims now flocking to Hawarden would sometimes bring an axe with them. The old gentleman in his shirt sleeves in the park could not accept the present without a few words of thanks in return.

Chips were sometimes served round by Mr Herbert Gladstone ¹

I resent this because tree-cutting was a well-ordered recreative business at Hawarden of quite a professional character. Never was an axe brought to Mr. Gladstone as a gift in Hawarden Park, and never did Mr. Gladstone say a few words to pilgrims in his shirt sleeves. Nor, may I say, did I ever serve chips to pilgrims. On one occasion, in strict accuracy, we were tracked by a small number of people and we gave them leave to pick up chips. But there was no speech. In fact, we always knew when excursions were coming, and it was easy enough to go to a secluded spot unobserved. There were always trees which required cutting in the park or woods to which the public had no access. And, in truth, the excursionists were invariably considerate of Mr. Gladstone's privacy.

¹ *W. E. Gladstone*, by Osbert Budett

We were much chaffed about the sale of chips and wood, but it was the only way out of a real difficulty. We were inundated by letters of request, mostly, of course, from sound Liberals, for chips or a piece of wood from a tree felled by Mr. Gladstone. It would have been churlish and quite impolitic to ignore them. We couldn't always be writing and sending chips. So it was put on a business footing in the Estate Office. Wood was sent on payment of a little more than the cost of despatch, and the proceeds were given to Mrs. Gladstone's orphanage. The system worked well and gave no trouble. Of course Mr. Gladstone was never bothered about these trumpery matters.

My eldest brother, Willy, as owner of Hawarden, was responsible for all these arrangements. It was constantly, and even now it is sometimes said that Mr. Gladstone's innate love of publicity led him to encourage large excursions as an excuse for speeches. Nothing could be further from the truth. My brothers and I were entirely responsible for inducing him to show himself or say a few words. Perhaps in this I bear the chief guilt. For I was a keen party politician, and when I saw hundreds of men arrive whom I knew to be the backbone of the party in a constituency I felt I did a good stroke of business for the party, in getting Mr. Gladstone to come out for a few minutes. It was not easy, and sometimes I had much trouble.

The only alternative was exclusion of the public from the park. Then it was quite certain that Mr. Gladstone would have been held up to scorn as a Radical landlord who selfishly kept a great area of park and woods to himself when Conservative landlords were granting free admission. As it was, every sort of ridiculous untruth was

spread abroad when, in fact, Mr. Gladstone pursued the even tenor of his ways entirely undisturbed.

Mr. Gladstone's life in the country was the life of a country gentleman who found some eight hours a day for working and reading. He spoke occasionally at the local flower shows and rent dinners. He understood the farmers, went to ploughing matches, to see new machinery, and took interest in all their concerns. Anyone could get on with Mr. Gladstone, and if they didn't it was their own fault, and, I will add, it was because of their own deficiencies. He was never a gossip and he hated scandal, but he could be as light in hand as a boy. The farmers delighted in his visits and in a free talk with a man who knew so much about agriculture, and was always so ready to learn from them.

He kept up his interest in shooting after he had himself given it up. The gun which had shot off his finger was passed on to us, and we all used it when we first began to shoot. It was a fine Westley Richards, and still is at Hawarden in good preservation. He disliked over preserving, but was not against the game laws.

Mr. Gladstone had plenty of physical courage, and in the years after 1880 when he was in serious danger he never showed a sign of uneasiness. One day he had got into his brougham at the door of Downing Street to drive to the House. A man came up and looked in at the window. Nothing happened, but that night the same man was arrested for firing a revolver at No. 10 Downing Street. He confessed that he had gone to Mr. Gladstone's carriage with the intention of shooting him, and he had only not done so because in Mr. Gladstone he saw a likeness to his own father. He



JAMES PARRY OF HAWARDEN

got rather a severe sentence, and subsequently I wrote on his case to the Home Secretary, then, I think, Sir Matthew Ridley. But the authorities considered him a dangerous fellow and declined to release him.

If half of what Mr. Gladstone's critics write about him were true, he would have been quite an impossible colleague for any purpose. How could any sensible men tolerate association with a person who was dominating and austere, ostensibly pious and without humour, verbose and sophisticated? So odious a kill-joy would never be asked to join anything. Yet this, without exaggeration, is quite often the description of Mr. Gladstone by writers who have not the smallest knowledge of the real man.

In Cabinet partnership under Peel, Aberdeen, and Russell, giving all he had to the common stock, he never troubled the waters by personal assertiveness. Then came six years under the doughty and self-willed Palmerston. The whole time as Chancellor of the Exchequer Mr. Gladstone was fighting his own chief on armaments and expenditure. Palmerston slanged but nevertheless tolerated and appreciated him. In his own four Cabinets he never had a personal dispute. Even colleagues who left on acute differences of opinion—Bright, Argyll, Forster, Chamberlain, Trevelyan—resigned with expressions of sincere and even affectionate personal regard. Indeed, the only inside criticism I can recall is that he did not press his own views sufficiently on his colleagues.

Quite apart from politics it was Mr. Gladstone's personal attractiveness, equally with his capacious powers, that led to the demand for his services in many directions. Not till after his death did even his own family know the width and variety of the work which he managed to weave into his

public duties. To mention some of them. In 1848 he was one of the founders of the Church of England Penitentiary Association which has done very noble work for eighty years. He initiated or helped to initiate other less-known organisations of a similar class, as well as institutions like the House of Charity in Soho and the Newport Market Refuge. From 1856 to 1878 he was the working Trustee for the Clumber estate of the Duke of Newcastle, with its important agricultural, mining, and forest interests. For some thirty years he was a regular visitor at Millbank Prison, a form of social duty rarely recognised in these days. What he consistently and persistently did for fifty years in one specially difficult and dangerous direction is now well known.

He did laborious work for years in connection with the Great Exhibition at South Kensington ; was a Trustee of the British Museum ; elected a Governor of Guy's Hospital, he held that post till his death ; and he was a founder of the London Library.

Mr. Gladstone never undertook any duty, small or large, to which he did not apply himself heart and soul. As soon as he appeared people had to get busy. Whether it was a question about the Elgin Marbles, of an ancient MS. at the British Museum, or for an extension at Guy's Hospital, Mr. Gladstone not only gave his best but had a special aptitude for getting the best out of others.

No writer will ever understand the personality of Mr. Gladstone unless he takes the trouble to follow him into private life. to find out what he really was, what that personality meant to all with whom he was associated by family ties, friendships, and community of interests in social work and occupations.

CHAPTER VI

SOME CHARACTERISTICS

“ Plato, who has been called, by Clement of Alexandria, the Moses of Athens, the philosopher of the Christians, by Arnobius, and the god of philosophers, by Cicero, Athenaeus accuses of envy, Theopompus, of lying, Suidas, of avarice, Aulus Gellius, of robbery, Porphyry, of incontinence, and Aristophanes, of impiety.

“ Aristotle, whose industry composes more than four hundred volumes, has not been less spared by the critics; Diogenes Laertius, Cicero, and Plutarch, have forgotten nothing that can tend to show his ignorance, his ambition, and his vanity”—ISAAC D’ISRAELI.

EULOGISTS of Mr Gladstone have been content for the most part to rest on Lord Morley’s biography. Adversaries have been more active. Controversy is not likely to cease for some time to come.

Friends and foes seem to me to get into unnecessary difficulties from starting on erroneous hypotheses. It is assumed that Mr. Gladstone’s character was so complex and paradoxical that his motives must be searched for in a labyrinth of complexities. It has often been said that Edward Grey confounded the diplomatic world by always speaking the truth. To many people Mr. Gladstone appears to have been a combination of Rienzi and Machiavelli, Cobden, Casaubon, and a Pope or two. They read into this complexity an unending series of explanations entirely satisfactory to themselves. Yet the key to Mr. Gladstone’s actions was simplicity.

He was a man subject, like the rest of us, to human limitations, and his energies through sixty years of public action were occupied in the practical work of getting things done. Conservative by training, individualist by conviction, but always seeking progress, he contested all polemical theories and propositions until, by study, he found them to be right. In this process he started as the advocate of what existed ; when, by study, he was driven from the old to the new position he argued with the zeal of a convinced convert. His extraordinary supremacy in debate was largely due to his familiarity with the arguments of the opposition. Usually he knew the case against him better than his opponents.

There was never a *volte-face* in Mr. Gladstone's changes of opinion in the true sense of the phrase. "*Volte-face*" is one of those words used by less scrupulous writers to suggest more than is actually the case. The implication is reversal of policy : not through reason and conviction, but through compulsion or motives of mere party or personal concern.

Whether it was Free Trade, Church establishment, Reform, or Home Rule, foreign or colonial policy, the mental process towards the conviction that certain action was both necessary and right was a matter of years. It was thoroughly characteristic, however exasperating to others, that Mr. Gladstone so constantly repudiated the charge of inconsistency. These transitions, thought out in detail, to him were no more inconsistent than was spring with winter. The passage of time, new information, development and organisation of public opinion, fresh alignments, unexpected issues took him forward in a reasoned, inexorable sequence, so that to him, while there were modifications of the old and adaptations to the new position, there was,

in working out and following the road to truth, no inconsistency.

Most people in ordinary life alter and reverse their opinions in irresponsible sloppiness of mind. "If a man", wrote Swift, "would register all his opinions upon love, politics, religion and learning, what a bundle of inconsistencies and contradictions would appear at last."

Casuistry to hide inconsistency is a common charge against Mr. Gladstone. His method of thought, characteristic and persistent, was due to his intense desire for exact truth. In small things and great things, in home and public life, this was alike evident. He was not a casuist.

It is often said that so long as the right thing is done, it does not much matter how it is done. It is a loose statement and does not bear criticism, for it strikes at the very root of efficiency in institutions as well as persons.

Inconsistency cannot necessarily be determined by actions. A man who denies his power to jump a stream when it is in flood is not inconsistent because he jumps it when the water goes down and the breadth is less. The true test can only be applied by examination of the reasoning processes which have led from one position to another.

Mr. Gladstone would not have been human if at times he had not been inconsistent. When he found his views were wrong he changed them, as, for instance, in his famous declaration about Jefferson Davis.¹ But errors of judgment of that kind cannot, by themselves, justify a general charge of inconsistency. Disestablishment of the Irish Church was not consistent with *The Church in its Relations with the State* (1838), nor the root principle of Free Trade with that of Protection. But

¹ In a speech at a dinner at Newcastle in 1862 he said that Jefferson Davis had made a nation. See Morley, u. p 79.

be it remembered in the words of Rasselas, "inconsistencies cannot both be right, but imputed to man they may both be true."

We are all guilty more or less. My contention is that Mr. Gladstone in consistency was far above the average because of his close, sometimes, perhaps, his meticulously close study before he committed himself to action. That led him often to see what others without study did not see, that action was only conditional. Hence his habit, exasperating to many, of proviso and parenthesis.

Home Rule is the usual pebble slung at Mr. Gladstone, but, unlike David's, it has never hit and never will hit the mark. For the simple reason that he believed in autonomy in principle and in practice alike for colonies, dominions, and the "nations" of the United Kingdom. He never opposed Home Rule as wrong in principle. Quite the reverse. He made this perfectly clear by his *History of an Idea*, in 1886.

Inconsistency may be quite right in its results. It is not necessarily a moral failing. But habitual or frequent inconsistency shows weakness both of intellect and character, because it shows deficiency in power of thought and in effort to seek the truth.

Events often drive statesmen from their own ground. The bombardment of Alexandria and the Nile expedition were forced on Mr. Gladstone and his government, and were quite inconsistent with the policy they desired to pursue. But so far as action in the general affairs of the nation is concerned, few men have worked on principles and reasoning more consistently than Mr. Gladstone.

I pass to that curious charge of self-deception. Against Mr. Gladstone it is quite a fashionable charge, but no one stops to consider what it really means. Of foolish charges it is one of the worst.

Who can prove it? What is the difference between self-deception, self-persuasion, self-conviction? How can any human being fairly say that another human being is guilty of self-deception?

What is it meant to mean? Presumably it is this. A man sees and knows the truth. For reasons he does not want it. So, consciously, he sets to work to hypnotise his moral sense until he convinces himself that the truth is not the truth. It makes no difference if throughout this process everyone is reminding him of the truth.

Clearly and on the face of it this is an imputation of a detestably wrong motive in such process. But by general agreement imputations of motive are held to be unjust, wrong, and outside fair controversy; because it is accepted that no one can see into another man's mind or conscience. Yet, since 1884, the general charge of self-deception is made against Mr. Gladstone as a *characteristic*. The date is important, for it is the date of this charge. If true after 1884, when Mr. Gladstone was 75, it must be true before 1884. Then why was it not made earlier?

So far as I have been able to make research, Mr. W. E. Forster first discovered and gave to the world this trait in Mr. Gladstone's character.

Speaking of Gordon's danger from the delay over the despatch of the relief force, he said in the House of Commons:

"I believe everyone but the Prime Minister is already convinced of that danger . . . and I attribute his not being convinced to his wonderful power of persuasion. He can persuade most people of most things, and above all, he can persuade himself of almost anything."

The phrase was at once taken up and changed into self-deception. Since 1884 it has been in continual use against Mr. Gladstone.

Mr. Forster used the phrase in hot debate. Let us see what he had to say in deliberate judgment. These were his words on May 4, 1882, on his resignation :

“ It is painful to leave colleagues and intimate friends at a time of difficulty ; and above all it is more painful to me than words can express to leave the service of my Right Honourable friend the Prime Minister, than whom there never was a chief who won more the affection, the loyalty, the respect, and the reverence of one who has served under him.”

The two passages are self-destructive. Clearly a man who can persuade himself of almost anything is outside any possible feeling of respect and reverence.

How can anyone say where faulty reasoning or mistaken judgment ends and self-deception begins ? Bishop Butler, writing on self-deception, penetrated the depths of human nature. In those regions all of us are in the net. St. John tells us “ If we say we have no sin we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us.” But Mr. Gladstone is singled out as possessing a special moral obliquity which enabled him to smother truth at will and believe what was not true. When he is wrong why should he not be honestly wrong like other people ? Lord Beaconsfield backed the wrong horse in 1875, but what purpose is served by asserting that the error was due to self-deception ? Such a charge in fact is absurd, even though in certain cases it approaches the truth. Appearances may deceive us. That is not self-deception. The fact that we may wish for something may unconsciously influence our views. Here Mr. Gladstone’s own maxim was that when in doubt between two courses, you will generally find the right one to be against what you yourself want.

Optimism is infinitely preferable to pessimism. Sanguine men are the salt of the earth. Do sanguine men exist on self-deception? Is it a sin to be sanguine?

The charge can be easily made by anyone against anybody. It is an imputation of motive which challenges directly a man's intellectual honesty, and therefore his correctitude of judgment. A man who for reasons of policy or self-advantage deliberately conceals from himself realities which he knows, in order to make things appear to others not as they are, but as he wishes them to appear to himself, and so acquires a habit, must necessarily lose all title to confidence. Obviously this is a very grave charge to make. Logically a man can deceive himself with equal facility concerning the motives for action whether the results of the action prove to be right or wrong. But the gist of any charge of self-deception is that a man more or less deliberately shuts his eyes to the truth in the process of persuading himself and then others that the view he desires is right. Whether or no such a charge in a given instance is *right*, it is a *petitio principii*. It can as easily be said of scientists or technical experts when giving evidence for a theory or a method, as of politicians arguing for the best available solution of a complex difficulty. All become advocates, rightly and of necessity.

To establish the charge of habitual or even frequent self-deception against Mr. Gladstone would involve close scrutiny and a subtle analysis of his motives on many occasions and the demonstration that in fact he had blinded his eyes to realities. No one has attempted this impossible task. Who has not occasionally, from some motive—hope, idealism, or, it may be, self-interest—laid undue stress on arguments for what turns

out to be the wrong side, and *per contra* depreciated sound arguments on the right side?

Mr. Gladstone's detractors invariably quote Mr. Forster's accusation without ever attempting to test its veracity. They expose themselves to exactly the same charge. But what is the fair truth? Confronted with problems on any question on which a decision involving a course of action has to be made, what is the invariable process? First, a man has to make up his mind on what is true, right, best, practicable, perhaps in related degrees. He must then in debate become an advocate. Every advocate has to show the strength of his own case and the comparative or actual weakness of his opponents'. Every advocate is open to the perfectly futile taunt of deceiving himself. If the charge is to rest anywhere with any appearance of justice, it rests upon the evidence of events. If this test is applied to the countless cases of Mr. Gladstone's strenuous advocacy in his more mature and responsible life, it will be found that intense examination before making up his mind usually led him to the right decision and the true arguments for it. Was he deceiving himself on Free Trade, finance, Irish Disestablishment, the Eastern Question, Home Rule, and numberless advocacies in which he proved to be right by the demonstration of facts? The facts speak for themselves.

The charge has recently been concentrated in connection with Mr. Gladstone's resignation of the party leadership in 1875 and his subsequent action. He deceived himself—it is said—into thinking that he wanted to retire; into thinking that he had a Divine call to return to public life, though his real motive was jealous dislike of Disraeli.

I turn for a moment to the kind of evidence

which a serious biographer considers good enough to prove that by 1876 Mr. Gladstone was thirsting for “renounced employs”. Mr. Buckle sifts every dust-heap to find scraps of gossip suitable for his purpose :

This restlessness was as observable at Hawarden as at Westminster. Early in the year [1875] Sir Louis Mallet told Lord George Hamilton “A great friend of mine and a first-rate judge of men and affairs has just come back from Hawarden. He says Gladstone is in a most restless frame of mind—so much so, that if he gets his opportunity he will become the great demagogue of the century”. And there was little doubt as to the quarry whom the old hunter, once more sniffing the scent, was preparing to stalk. His mind was full of his successful rival and of deep suspicions of that rival’s character and policy¹

Mr. Buckle reads that Lord George Hamilton was told by Sir Louis Mallet, who had been told by a great friend not named of an opinion formed at Hawarden, presumably on a private visit, about Mr. Gladstone! This *evidence* leaves Mr. Buckle in little doubt. I don’t know who the witness was, but on my own personal knowledge I state categorically that the opinion given—if it was given—was absolutely contrary to the fact. I quote this passage only to show the evidence on which Mr. Buckle founds his views of Mr. Gladstone’s actions.

In retiring, Mr. Gladstone may have been right or wrong. His family, one and all, were strongly against him. Mrs. Gladstone urged every argument against it in talk and in letters. But his mind was made up. He was sixty-five and weary after fifteen years’ incessant political toil. He had accomplished the work he had set out to do in 1868. The country had rejected him and his government. He longed for freedom, and had

¹ *Life of Disraeli*, vi. p. 57.

set his mind to deal with Vaticanism, the bearing of scientific discovery on religion, and his old favourite, Homer. At the moment there was no political question at home or abroad which called for his services as a matter of duty.

All this is incontestable. But it is argued he should have resigned his seat and cleared out. Whether he should have done that is a matter of opinion. It would have made no difference. When the Eastern Question broke out, Mr. Gladstone would have had precisely the same call to action. Scores of seats would have been offered to him.

So it all boils down to one issue. Was Mr. Gladstone right or wrong in coming to the front on the Eastern Question? This is a matter which cannot be decided by the political claims and convenience of party leaders, however eminent. Suffice it to say that Mr. Gladstone looked upon the Eastern Question as a national crisis in which he had great personal responsibility. There was no one else to take action. Lord Hartington lost a great chance when he saw nothing wrong in the rejection of the Berlin Memorandum and in the revival of the old Crimean policy by the Government.¹ Not only did he miss his opportunity, but he stood apart from Mr. Gladstone, who gave to the country the lead which Lord Hartington ought to have given.

Lord Granville and Lord Hartington gave their *imprimatur* to the Midlothian candidature. They did this knowing quite well that in the public mind it would be taken as the central attack on the Government. Every politician of

¹ "I do not believe there exists in the country any distrust of the proceedings of Her Majesty's Government" (House of Commons, June 9, 1876).

insight, excepting Lord Beaconsfield, and the Queen, knew what it meant. Lord Granville, the senior leader, and Lord Hartington knew it perfectly. They had accepted Mr. Gladstone's Eastern policy. They accepted the consequence with generosity and dignity.

Events called inexorably for the personality with the greatest power to deal with them. In 1884 General Stephenson, the man in command on the spot, and a senior officer, had to give way to Wolseley as the most competent man to overcome the difficulties of the Nile. So in civil affairs the situation requires the man most competent to deal with it. Randolph Churchill "drove" Northcote out of the House of Commons after five years of patient leadership. Hicks-Beach, a year later, yielded the leadership to Churchill. Personal claims, unless founded on considerations other than seniority or honest service, are inexorably swept away in the march of nations.

The life and work of British statesmen belong to the history of the nation. Let their actions, whenever necessary, be criticised, condemned, arraigned. Judgment should be founded on evidence and realities, and not on the imputation of unworthy motives for the purpose of discrediting public servants, to whatever creed or party they belong.

CHAPTER VII

THE ADVANCE OF SCIENCE

REFERRING to the great development of scientific discovery in the nineteenth century, Lord Morley says :¹

Mr. Gladstone watched these things vaguely and with misgiving, instinct must have told him that the advance of natural explanation, whether legitimately or not, would be in some degree at the expense of the supernatural. But from any full or serious examination of the details of the scientific movement he stood aside, safe and steadfast within the citadel of Tradition

With this I cannot agree. It seems to me to miss the facts and the truth of Mr. Gladstone's attitude. To whatever criticism he may fairly be open, there was no vagueness in what he thought and did in defining his attitude in the conflict between religion and science.

It is frequently and erroneously said that Mr. Gladstone knew and cared little about physical science. His mathematical studies at Oxford included optics, hydrostatics, and mechanics. At Eton in the 'sixties I found myself in difficulties over mechanics. I consulted Mr. Gladstone, and remember a certain feeling of surprise at the ease and clearness with which he explained them.

It is, of course, true that never having done

¹ Vol 1 p. 209.

any laboratory or technical work he knew little or nothing of detail in the "applied" sciences. Excepting experts, who, indeed, does? Lord Salisbury's laboratory work was exceptional. It is rash to speculate on Mr. Gladstone's ignorance of any great subject. He took a close personal interest in all scientific discoveries bearing on manufacture, production, and public utility. His railway work at the Board of Trade gave him a direct interest in the development of locomotive and railway engineering. Years of occupation over the Oak Farm¹ property in Staffordshire made him familiar with coal mining and the manufacture of iron and steel. When, as Chancellor of the Exchequer, he removed innumerable duties, he made a close study of the prospects of industries in connection with scientific progress which was doing so much to improve manufacturing processes. On the specific gravity of alcoholic liquor he could speak like an expert. Manufacturers who came to the Treasury to state their case were surprised to find the accuracy with which Mr. Gladstone had grasped the scientific side of their industries.

Electricity in particular interested him. Already it had been spoken of as the coming motive power. The telephone and gramophone had come into existence, and he always enjoyed going to electrical exhibitions at the Crystal Palace and elsewhere. In 1881 he was made a Fellow of the Royal Society, and attended lectures and demonstrations. Certainly in the course of his life Mr. Gladstone accumulated much practical knowledge of the bearing of science on industrial and economic progress.

I have no wish to exaggerate the facts.

¹ For the story of the Oak Farm property, see Morley, vol. i, pp. 337 *et seq.*

Scientists devoted to their work are indeed usually ready to pour out detail for the benefit of their listeners, and I can well imagine that sometimes they may have mistaken Mr. Gladstone's strict time limits for want of interest in their subjects.

To reading on the pure sciences he gave quite a considerable part of his time.

Long before the publication of *The Origin of Species*, his own propensities turned his attention to anthropology and ethnology. He had read Cuvier and Owen and leading writers on astronomy and geology.

This kind of reading became much wider and more direct when evolution aroused public attention. The Diary shows that he studied Darwin, Spencer, Huxley, Tyndall, Lockyer, Howorth, Strauss, Renan, and other protagonists who took part in what Mr. Gladstone was quick to call the conflict between religion and science. He was in touch with Sayce, Driver, Margoliouth, and other great students of Egyptology and Assyriology. His controversy with Huxley shows that though not a match for that redoubtable antagonist on his own ground, he had studied the work of biologists and physicists, and brought to bear a wide range of Biblical and historical knowledge and research.

Lord Morley is in a general sense right in saying that Mr. Gladstone remained in the citadel of Tradition—or as I should prefer to put it, of Authority. Mr. Gladstone's principle was to uphold all institutions, tenets, practices, dogmas, whether social, political, or religious, established by the work and views of the best and greatest authorities of the past, until weakness or error were demonstrated. On that principle he acted in great things and small through life. *The*

Origin of Species was published in 1859, but the truths of evolution did not take hold of the public mind for some ten or fifteen years. Prominent scientists began without delay to make it, in combination with general scientific advance, the basis of an overt attack on Biblical history, theological dogmas, and revealed religion. From then and to his death Mr. Gladstone was active in his citadel, maintaining its structure, abandoning faulty outworks, constructing new ones. He was a layman, heavily engaged in political and public duties, yet always on the alert.

When Mr. Gladstone saw danger, he never turned his back on it. Quite apart from the advance of science, he had scented danger in agnosticism, which seemed to accompany the great increase of material prosperity. To that he turned his mind as soon as he was free from office in 1874. From the general defence of religious belief and faith he soon passed to the direct examination of the bearing of science on religion.

At such a time, when the faith of many men was being shaken, it was not in his nature to sit still. Many there were who looked to him as a guide and instructor, and in Lord Morley's own words, in another connection, "he had nothing in common with a lazy spirit of unconcern".

From the first he welcomed scientific discoveries positively and definitely. What he chiefly resented was the dogmatic attitude of scientists, their contempt—at that time—for religion without having made good their own ground, and their dialectical methods. In 1874 he wrote to Herbert Spencer :

I shall ever feel grateful to those who, by enlarging the field of knowledge, enrich the patrimony of mankind. But I hold that they are themselves bound by the laws of reason

To treat a man as the enemy of science is to treat him as the enemy of Truth

He saw that irreligion, quite apart from scientific discoveries, was advancing. Paganism for a time, he thought, had got the upper hand as in the early Hanoverian days of the eighteenth century, and in the second quarter of the nineteenth. By energy and effort Truth would be re-established. Agnosticism and irreligion were the danger.

He defended authority with tenacity, but already he had made concessions to science. "One admission", he wrote to Lord Acton in 1874, "has to be made, that death did not come into the world by sin." He accepted the demonstration of science, but short of that he refused to give way.

He was not afraid of evolution. Writing in 1874 to Professor Jevons : ¹

I must say that the doctrine of Evolution, if it be true, enhances in my judgment the proper idea of the greatness of God, for it makes every stage of Creation a legible prophecy of all those which are to follow it.

At the time evolution itself was still a matter of scientific controversy. Only by militant agnostics was it held to be destructive of Divine creation. Even now, over fifty years later, the problem of descent has not been fully solved, though the evolution theory is generally accepted. But on the supposition of its truth, Mr. Gladstone's faith remained unshaken.

It does not bring all creatures into a single lineage, but all diversities are to be traced back, at some point in the scale and by stages indefinitely minute, to a common ancestry. All is done by steps, nothing by strides, leaps or bounds, all from protoplasm up to Shakespeare, and

¹ Lathbury, vol ii. p. 101.

again as we may suppose all from primal night and chaos up to protoplasm I do not ask, and am incompetent to judge whether this is among the things proven, but I take it so for the sake of the argument ; and I ask first, why and whereby does this doctrine eliminate the idea of creation ? Does the new philosophy teach that if the passage from pure reptile to pure bird is achieved by a spring (so to speak) over a chasm, this implies and requires creation ; but that if reptile passes into bird, and rudimental into finished bird, by a thousand slight and but just discernible modifications, each one of these is so small that they are not entitled to a name so lofty and may be set down to any cause or no cause, as we please I should have supposed it miserably unphilosophical to treat the distinction between creative and non-creative function as a simply quantitative distinction ¹

He was never afraid of science, nor did he watch its great results either vaguely or with misgiving. In 1890 he summed up his own attitude :

Apart altogether from faith, and from the general evidences of Revelation, a new witness has come into the court, in the shape of Natural Science. She builds up her system on the observation of facts and upon inferences from them which at length attain to a completeness and security such as, if not presenting us with a demonstration in the strictest sense, *constrain us, as intelligent beings, to belief*

(The italics are my own.) So his position was this :

We should dispel wholly from our minds those spectral notions of antagonism between religion and science which have been raised up by the action of prejudice on the one side, and perhaps by the occasional practice of bragging on the other. Of religion and science, as of man and wife, let us boldly say, “ What God hath joined, let not man put asunder ”.²

Lord Morley, as he records in his preface, did not enter on the subject of Mr. Gladstone’s

¹ *N. American Review*, 1888

² *The Impregnable Rock of Holy Scripture*, pp. 217 *et seq.*

personal religion, and therefore did not carry his researches beyond what was clearly required in the general picture. This accounts, I think, for his description of Mr. Gladstone's position in relation to science as "vague".

Apart from correspondence, the following writings show Mr. Gladstone's active and definite efforts to strengthen the citadel :

The Courses of Religious Thought, 1876
Authority in Matters of Opinion, 1877
Probability as the Guide of Conduct, 1879
Dawn of Creation, 1885
Proem to Genesis, 1885
Robert Elsmere and the Battle of Belief, 1888.
Ingersoll on Christianity, 1888
The Impregnable Rock of Holy Scripture, 1890.
Huxley and the Swine Miracle, 1891.

Lux Mundi itself was not published till 1889. Not till then did the ablest of the younger theologians publish what, in the preface, is described as the interpretation of faith received in an epoch of profound transformation "certain to involve great changes in the outlying departments of theology". Mr. Gladstone read this book with great interest, corresponded with its authors, and characterised as "masterly" the paper of Canon (now Bishop) Gore.

The passage from the biography which I have quoted is, I believe, the one criticism in Lord Morley's work to which Mr. Gladstone would have taken serious exception. He had given his own mind ardently for at least fifteen continuous years to what he himself called "the battle of science and religion". To quote his own words, he was "grateful both to science and scientists for having assisted or for having compelled those who believe to correct errors which in the wantonness of power they may too long have cherished, and

to submit all their claims to free and critical investigation ”.

Authority, probability, must be the main roads of guidance in life. “ Duty does not require us to arrive at conclusions on ‘ fixed fate, free will, foreknowledge absolute ’.”¹

Is there not something of the same spirit in the moving lines of Mrs. Huxley, inscribed by Professor Huxley’s own wish on his tombstone :

Be not afraid, ye waiting hearts that weep
For still He giveth His beloved sleep,
And if an endless sleep He wills, so best ²

¹ *The Impregnable Rock of Holy Scripture*, p 292

² *Life and Letters of Huxley*, by L. Huxley, ii 403

CHAPTER VIII

SOCIAL REFORM

" Amid all the seeming inconsistencies of his public career, which exposed him to the shallow charge of time-serving and even of hypocrisy, history will discern a steady process of evolution, guided always by certain governing principles. He was the most faithful and enlightened steward there has ever been of our national finance. He abhorred waste. He preferred the remission of burdensome taxation even to the diminution of the public debt. His great aim was that the resources of the country, in the phraseology of those days, should "fructify in the pockets of the people", not to be wasted in public or private extravagance, but to replenish the reservoir from which both capital and industry are fed. He never faltered in his allegiance to the cause of setting free the smaller nationalities, crushed between the upper and the nether millstones of arrogant and militant autocracies. He was the pioneer in the long, arduous, still uncompleted struggle, in the international sphere, of right against might, of freedom against force "

—Mr. ASQUITH, 1922.

Is it true that Mr. Gladstone had no sympathy with the working classes? with their sufferings and hardships? that he did nothing for them?

Should collectivists, now in possession of the work and experience of the past, claim superiority over individualist predecessors? Does collectivism mean more than another onward stage in social progress? Each generation according to its lights and acquired experience toils cumbrously forward. We have arrived at collectivism, but none the less we have to depend on individuals. That was the first lesson learnt in the great Russian adventure in unconditional collectivism. We have got to the top of the mountain only to find higher summits beyond.

We see visions and construct ideals. They are necessary to progress. Often they are little more than the fancies of our imperfections. At best they are founded on what we know, hope, imagine. Idealism is a virtue in the making.

Phrases do not solve the difficulties of enormous aggregations of people. Scientific discoveries are too sudden and too frequent for quick and satisfactory adaptation in the social structure. So limited are the resources of governments in time and money, and consequently in organisation.

Physics, chemistry, engineering, in immensity of power bring into clearer relief the limitations of humanity in physical and mental strength. New records in travel by air, sea, or land are broadcasted to the homes of the unemployed, but they neither bring nor hasten employment. We may rashly plume ourselves on being and doing better than our predecessors, but let exhilaration be tempered by the fortunate certainty that fifty years hence superior people will point sarcastically to our days which tolerated miserable housing, scanty wages, insufficient food, strikes and lock-outs, a harsh penal code, the disparity of wealth and poverty, the rule of the rich, the lack of opportunity among the poor.

Yet the people have the vote, are organised, and are extremely vocal. Clearly collectivism has not as yet showered the benefits on the many which individualism is supposed to have reserved for the privileged few. Collectivism depends on its units, and progress depends and will always depend on the character and work of the individual. Let us therefore be prudent in not valuing ourselves too high or early Victorians too low in virtue and ability.

The upward movement of mankind is always slow. It cannot be quickened by materialism.

Its speed depends on the aspirations of the human mind, its grasp of religious and moral truths, its readiness for self-sacrifice, its zeal in effort.

Mr. Gladstone from his earliest days was an individualist. To ask why he did not sooner grasp some of the tenets of collectivism is about as reasonable as to ask why Cuvier did not discover the theory of evolution, or why Tyndall remained ignorant of wireless transmission. All great discoveries and movements require years of absorbing study. Prophets and theorists may discourse wisely and truly and lead men to greater knowledge and better lives, but they are not men of action, and leave the more trying work of performance to others. Mr. Gladstone was no visionary, no theorist, but a man of action, who saw things as they were and laid his hands on the plough which could make the furrow. He has to be judged by what he did in the world in which he did it, and also by what he refused to do. His outlook was national and international, not for a class, whether employers or employed, but for all. He viewed the nation as a whole, always remembering that action beneficial to the nation was beneficial to the working classes who were nine-tenths of it. This was the true spirit of his policy before the days of enfranchisement. It characterised his action in the policy of Free Trade which lowered the cost of commodities, in his sound principles of taxation and finance, in the Post Office Savings Bank, in franchise and the ballot, in the Education Act, in his denunciation of war, in the *Alabama* arbitration, and in his life contest against unnecessary expenditure in armaments.

The wisest heads among the Socialists themselves recognised that by Fabian tactics alone could they inform and educate the country, and so bring about the stage of actuality and possi-

bility. The story of Home Rule shows how a politician in a commanding position may have to pay the penalty for proposing definite schemes in advance of the thought and experience of the time.

If all this is true, as I believe it to be, Mr. Gladstone was, nevertheless, out of touch with industrial reformers in the 'forties. Facts and arguments were then before him, and he did not rise to them. Here I prefer explanation to defence.

He always required "clear and firm ground" for action. I cannot for a moment believe that he did not sympathise with the workers in mines and factories. But he was not able to leave the ground on which he stood—individualism. It was wrong to weaken in any degree the incentive to individual effort on which the nation depended as much as the individual himself. To bring in the State between employers and employed was an interference which sapped the foundations of the whole structure. His view for many years was the general view of the Conservative party and the middle class.

Mr. Gladstone was not the man to change his ground without long and careful thought. For a long time collectivism requiring and justifying State interference was to him heretical and dangerous.

In Peelite days arose one of the many side issues in Mr. Gladstone's life of which the details have not yet been made public. It turns light on the true reasons for Mr. Gladstone's backwardness in the social legislation of the 'forties.

The case of the coal whippers and Mr. Gladstone's connection with them has only been mentioned by Lord Morley in a line or two.

Yet it occupied Mr. Gladstone's attention in no small measure for some fifteen years, from 1842 to 1857. Briefly the case was this. The coal whippers were the men employed in the London docks, "whipping" in baskets from ships to barges or wharfs all sea-borne coal which came to London. They were engaged and discharged through the medium of public-houses. A man could not get employment except by the good-will of the publicans, and that was only to be gained by drinking. A man's name was written up and the "score" followed. Employment was then given by the publican on the sole calculation of a man's capacity or incapacity to pay. The results were inevitable. The men worked in gangs of nine, and before leaving the public-house had a final drink. They went to their work not infrequently drunk.

The work was extremely hard. Men were known to have whipped as much as twenty tons in the day. The pay usually fluctuated from 18s. 3d. to 19s. 6d. a week. They worked ten or twelve hours a day. Employment was uncertain and their wretched savings went largely to the publicans in payment of debts and to secure good-will for further employment. This came to the knowledge of Mr. Gladstone when he was President of the Board of Trade. He took a close personal interest and in 1843 brought in and passed an Act providing a Central Office through which the men were to get employment.

The Act of 1843 expired in 1856 and in some quarters renewal was urged. A Select Committee was appointed by the House of Lords in 1857 to go into the question, and Mr. Gladstone gave evidence. At the outset he explained his position. Distressing statements had come to him at the Board of Trade. "I approached the

subject in the first instance as I think everyone in Parliament of necessity did, with the strongest possible prejudice against the proposal [to interfere] ; but the facts stated were of so extraordinary and deplorable a character, that it was impossible to withhold attention from them. Then the question being whether legislative interference was required I was at length induced to look at a remedy of an extraordinary character as the only one I thought applicable to the case." And again, "it was a great innovation". At that time so it was.

By this it will be seen clearly what, at the time, was his firm ground. There was this terrible "innovation", but then the men were reduced to a state of the utmost demoralisation and wretchedness, both moral and physical. So by demonstration the scale of humanity outweighed authority. The men were to be released from a condition of slavery. The Act was a kind of protection, but it was not designed to create a monopoly and keep up wages. It was made terminable.

The evidence explains, though it does not excuse, Mr. Gladstone's failure to see that the argument which justified his Coal Whippers' Act should have gained a like support for the Mines and Factory Acts.

That there was no want of personal sympathy with those poor fellows is clear from what followed. For many years there are entries in Mr. Gladstone's Diary of deputations received, visits to the docks, attendance at a House of Commons Committee appointed in 1852.

On May 14, 1851, the Diary says :

6½ to 12, went to Shadwell to Coal Whippers' meeting. These men were delighted to see and hear, apart from the excess of their grateful feelings towards me which made me

much ashamed. I spoke at some length. . . . There was a great burst for me about Papal Aggression¹ Three working men made very powerful speeches, Navell, Bar-thorpe, and Applegate

Six p.m. till midnight ! According to his wont Mr. Gladstone's action was not perfunctory. When once his attention was called to a matter of urgency he did not content himself with official action, but personally took endless trouble.

There is a question which historians would do well to consider. Though there had been no political agitation, as we now understand it, for social reform even by the Chartists, yet Parliament in the 'forties was primarily concerned with the price of food, and the conditions of employment in mines, factories, and workshops. Why, after the passing of the Factory Act in 1847, was not general interest aroused and maintained on the more intimate necessities of the working classes—health and safety in employment, reasonable wages, housing, sanitation, and so forth? Interest dropped for more than a generation. A voice here and there ; some books, notably J. S. Mill's ; but there was no insistence. Statistical information was scanty and not in demand. When democracy came on the stage through the Reform Act of 1867, the demand was not for social but political change. Socialist Radicals, like Auberon Herbert and Charles Dilke, attacked monarchy itself. Individualism still prevailed. Still later when Chamberlain, as the leader of political innovation, appealed to the masses on formulated innovations, free education and allotments for agricultural labourers were perhaps his most advanced proposals.

¹ His opposition to the Ecclesiastical Titles Bill. The Bill passed by a great majority ; was futile in results ; and was repealed by Mr. Gladstone in 1871.

Presumably the answer is that the social ameliorations of the 'forties were due to the personal activities of Shaftesbury and a few others. Conservative support of the Factory Act was chiefly a riposte against Peel's Free Trade and did not arise from the pressure of the people most concerned. In short, the masses had not realised the bearing of their own necessities. Reforms were spasmodic because they came from the top and not the bottom.

Whatever the accurate answers may be, Mr. Gladstone himself was beginning to see that the "gravity" of State interference was less vital than the policy of non-interference. Professor Ramsay Muir quotes a saying in 1864 of Mr. Townsend of the *Spectator*—a very good authority :

He [Mr. Gladstone] does not hesitate to apply the full powers of the State to ameliorate social anomalies as he showed by creating State Banks, State insurance offices and State annuities for the very poor¹

Similarly he interfered to some purpose to safeguard Irish tenants from the landlords in 1870.

To whatever degree he, like almost everyone else, failed to realise the hard necessities in the daily life of working people, at least he was foremost in admitting their right to vote independently and through the vote to acquire political power. He cast no jealous eye on their advent. He welcomed the election of Labour representatives. In 1891 I wrote an article for a magazine urging joint action between Liberals and the growing Labour organisations. Many Liberals scented danger to the two-party system and disliked any recognition of a second progressive party. Mr. Gladstone read the article with such approval that he wrote to Bryce, then Chairman of the Liberal

¹ Hearnshaw's *Prime Ministers of the Nineteenth Century*, p. 240.

Publications Department, asking him to publish it. Bryce did not like it. He compromised by publishing it without the direct *imprimatur* of the party. In 1892 twelve Labour candidates were returned, and Mr. Gladstone met them all at a private dinner given by Mr. George (afterwards Lord) Armitstead. The miners sent the majority. In those days they were the most stable and reliable element in the Liberal party.

Individualism is the key to Mr. Gladstone's action in relation to the working classes through sixty years. By training and predilection he was at heart an individualist, gradually yielding to demonstrated necessity of State action on a large scale as he was driven to yield on a small scale even so early as 1843.

On known facts and the evidence of history, it is certain that Mr. Gladstone's mind, when it did change, changed very slowly. As a Peelite and an independent, transition to Liberalism took him over ten years. For over twenty years he studied the Irish Church before disestablishment. The views which brought him out on the Eastern Question in 1876 were those which he held from the time of the Crimean War.

With his progressive advance to Home Rule I deal elsewhere. Yielding at times to necessity, he remained an individualist to the end. The cumulative effect of self-help and individual effort in every unit of a nation to him seemed greater and better than the restricting and deadening results of average collectivism imposed on the life-giving sources of human minds and aspirations.

CHAPTER IX

“ FOOTPRINTS ”

“ It is a great mistake to suppose that social evils can be cured by any single slap-dash remedy. Hard and careful work along the whole front of social reform and national betterment is the only way. Liberalism has never been expressed by a single phrase or embodied in a single policy. It is a movement of the human mind guided by broad principles and driven forward by moral impulses which makes itself felt through every branch and sphere of our social life. It is animated, not by spite and envy, but by sympathy and goodwill. It is advanced by knowledge, industry and understanding. It must never shrink from encountering the obstruction of classes or special interests when it is marching resolutely towards the well-being of the whole Commonwealth. . . . I believe that Liberalism with its culture, its humanities, its tolerance, holds the golden key; and if it gains the necessary power, can alone open the path of real progress to the whole people. Whether it gains the power or not, it has still great causes to defend ”—WINSTON CHURCHILL

M. MAUROIS is the latest example of many writers who appear to have formed their views of Mr. Gladstone on the last twenty years of his life. It is the fashion of the day. Tories cannot forgive the attack on Beaconsfield. The heirs of Whig tradition attribute to Mr. Gladstone the downfall of their party. Effective condemnation because of later policy requires forgetfulness of what went before.

The battle on the two great personalities persists quite hotly. The writer who in a sentence proclaims that Gladstonian fires are long extinct, in many others has to bring in the ashes to deck the memoirs of Beaconsfield. It is extremely interesting, and it is intelligible. Withdraw Peel

and Gladstone from the story of Lord Beaconsfield's political life and all the salt goes. Whereas the rencontre with Peel was past and gone in ten years, Disraeli and Mr. Gladstone sat in the House of Commons in varying relationship for nearly forty years. Mr. Gladstone may be regarded as a foil for Disraeli's humour, or as a stepping-stone to the accomplishment of what seems to have been the main object of his life ; yet he is far more essential than even Peel to the display of Lord Beaconsfield's peculiar and extraordinary powers. However much the writers may dislike it, they cannot escape from their own advertisement of Mr. Gladstone. In short, the story and fame of one is inseparable from the story and fame of the other. The fascination is in the contrast of character, ideas, qualities, and—results.

Some hold Mr. Gladstone to have been a visionary. Exactly what he was not. In private as well as in public life Mr. Gladstone's objective was to get things done. There is no statesman in modern times with a record comparable in actual results. A book could be written on his work at the Board of Trade, in the reorganisation of the office, in developing its competence for the administration of great commercial and business concerns. It was at the Board of Trade that Mr. Gladstone worked for Sir Robert Peel, drafted and passed a great Railway Act. Before Mr. Gladstone became Chancellor of the Exchequer, the office was an ordinary administrative post. In 1853 and subsequently, Mr Gladstone gave it distinction and importance. With the Prime Minister and Foreign Secretary in the House of Lords the Chancellor of the Exchequer *ex officio* led the House of Commons.

Was it a visionary who planned and carried the masterly legislation from 1868 to 1874 ? Johnson defines " visionary " as a man " affected by

phantoms ; disposed to receive impressions on the imagination ”. And on the imagination *only*. A visionary does not even try things, as Mr. Gladstone tried for Home Rule.

I see in much of the criticism of Mr. Gladstone a strong note of exasperation. There is a sense of defeat. Mr. Gladstone was too often a winner. Apart from the Irish University question and one or two secondary matters, when once he had set his hand to the plough where, in finance and legislation, did Mr. Gladstone fail ? True, he failed to carry his Home Rule Bills. But he sent out the light which eventually brought the country to his policy at a heavy charge for compound interest.

Mr. Disraeli was Chancellor of the Exchequer before Mr. Gladstone. He had his chance, but he had no genius for laborious detail and constructive work. Mr. Gladstone demolished his Budget in 1852, and subsequently carried all his own against Disraeli. To this day his principles and practice in finance guide and lighten the labours of every Chancellor of the Exchequer. It was Mr. Gladstone who in the main gave effect to the Free Trade views of Sir Robert Peel. He became the leader in the reform movement.

How, following the words of Lord Morley, his own energetic and beneficent genius played the master part in abolishing restrictions upon the application of capital and the exercise of industry and skill ; how he abolished tests and won the battle of religious freedom ; what he did for University reform ; how effectually he co-operated in establishing the finest Civil Service in the world—are these things not written, and the wisdom of them, in the Statute Book of the nation, and in the chronicles of the British Government ?

Of all this Mr. Trevelyan—in some ways a severe critic—says: “Viewing his life down its whole length, many will conclude that he did more than any other man to adapt the machinery of the British State and the habits of British politicians to modern democratic conditions, without a total loss of the best standard of the older world”.¹

By those not conversant with colonial history Mr. Gladstone was often charged with being a “Little Englander”. Let Mr. Gladstone himself make answer. At Edinburgh on March 17, 1880, he said :

I believe we are all united—indeed it would be most unnatural if we were not—in a fond attachment, perhaps in something of a proud attachment, to the great country to which we belong—to this great Empire, which has committed to it a trust and a function given from Providence as special and as remarkable as ever was entrusted to the family of man. Gentlemen, when I speak of that trust and the function I feel that words fail me, I cannot tell you what I think of the nobleness of the inheritance that has descended upon us, of the sacredness of the duty of maintaining it. I will not condescend to make it a part of controversial politics. It is a part of my being, of my flesh and blood, of my heart and soul. For those ends have I laboured through my youth and manhood till my hairs are grey. In that faith and practice I have lived; in that faith and practice I will die.

Durham, Molesworth, Wakefield, and Godley were leading pioneers, but Mr. Gladstone was the first statesman in the House of Commons to educate opinion for the liberation of the colonies from Downing Street autocracy, and to take the only road leading to the unity of the Empire. Lord Morley does not fully bring out the real significance of Mr. Gladstone’s sojourn at the

¹ *History of England*, p 689.

Colonial Office as Under-Secretary in 1835, and Secretary in 1845-46. The periods of office were too short for effective administrative work and moreover Mr. Gladstone was a young learner. He defended transportation—perhaps the most curious error of judgment in his life, excepting the allusion to Jefferson Davis—and wrote an unwise letter to a recalled governor. The great contribution he made to the Government service was deferred, but it had its origin at the Colonial Office. He read hard on all departmental subjects, railway gauges, sugar, Canadian defence, colonial unity, the Australian Church, transportation, coolie emigration, the timber trade, and so forth. He got down to fundamentals, and between 1835 and 1855 took a prominent and gradually a leading part in colonial debates. He rejected Mr. Disraeli's “ millstone ” view, with which even Lord John Russell seemed to sympathise. He took, in those early days, a true measure of the incapacity of Downing Street to understand colonial opinions and solve colonial problems. “ He had grasped the conception of the British Commonwealth as a partnership of free peoples.”¹

Professor Knaplund, in a most useful work,² traces this movement in detail. After 1845, “ within a short time he became one of the foremost champions of the Commonwealth creed ”. J. R. Godley, in his open letter (1849), wrote :

You seem to me to be the one among our leading statesmen who has most hopefully considered the question of colonial reform.

Mr. Gladstone's idea was to reproduce “ happy Englands ” in the colonies through the “ free will

¹ “ Gladstone ”, Ramsay Muir, *Prime Ministers of the Nineteenth Century* (Macmillan)

² *Gladstone and Britain's Imperial Policy* (George Allen and Unwin, 1926), p. 53.

and the affection of the colonial community". By freedom the colonies were to be bound to England. In 1852, on the New Zealand Government Bill, he spoke strongly for granting self-government to the colonies. He held that the training on which alone we could rely was the training received before leaving the mother country. "Let them carry their freedom with them even as they carry their agricultural implements, or anything else necessary to establish them in their new abodes; so let them hold it for themselves, and so let them transmit it to their children. This is the true secret of subduing the difficulties of colonisation." And again: "Every question in which you cannot show the Imperial interest shall be left to be dealt with and managed by the colonies themselves." He saw that the colonies, sooner or later, would rightly insist on freedom. He was not afraid of freedom under the Crown, and maintained that through self-government alone would colonies remain part of the Empire. His strong views in this direction in my belief explain the Transvaal inaction in 1880. The federation policy of Lord Carnarvon and Sir Bartle Frere was attractive to him because at the time it seemed a possible basis for South African representative government (see p. 201).

He was never misled by the showy but impracticable attractions of Imperial Federation. It was in fact but a glorified form of Downing Street government. He was often bitterly attacked for lack of sympathy with the true Imperial spirit. Recollecting the years through which he had striven successfully to establish the true conception of a greater England, it was no wonder that he was keenly sensitive to these attacks. At Chester in 1855 he had said:

Govern them [the colonies] upon a principle of freedom. Defend them against aggression from without. Regulate

their foreign relations. These things belong to the Colonial connection. But of the duration of that connection let them be the judges, and I predict that if you leave them this freedom of judgment, it is hard to say when the day will come when they will wish to separate from the great name of England.

Then at Leeds in October 1881 came the prophecy made famous by fulfilment:

Perhaps if the day of difficulty and danger should arise we may from the affection of the Colonies, obtain advantage and assistance which compulsion would never have wrung from them, and may find that all portions of the British Empire have one common mart, and are equally devoted to the honour and interests of their common country.

It had not so appeared to Mr. Disraeli: “These wretched Colonies will all be independent, too, in a few years, and are a millstone round our necks.”¹

Mr. Gladstone saw clearly that these strong offsets of Great Britain required for their own development the same freedom which had brought greatness to the mother country.

That was the foundation of his policy which he more than any other man made the policy of the nation.

There were no millstones in 1914.

In foreign policy is there any statesman of the nineteenth century whose personal impress on Europe is more permanently marked than Mr. Gladstone’s? I again quote from Professor Ramsay Muir.²

If the test of greatness in a statesman is rather to be found in his influence upon the mind of his generation and upon its future course of action than in his actual achievements, I think it may be fairly claimed that foreign policy was the sphere in which Gladstone’s ideas counted for most.

¹ Disraeli, 1852 (*Life of*, iii. p. 385).

² *Prime Ministers of the Nineteenth Century*, Professor Ramsay Muir, p. 245.

Bismarck, one of the great figures of the nineteenth century, after a succession of wars established the unity of the German Empire. He also established the supremacy of the War Lord, and was himself its early victim. Where now is Bismarckian militarism?

Cavour, Thiers, Gortschakoff did much for their own countries, but where outside them did they leave footprints in the sands of time?

Mr. Gladstone's name to-day stands out in the memory of all the small countries of Europe. For this he has incurred the satire of Mr. Wells. Unrest and war in Europe after the Napoleonic era have been principally due to the ambition of great powers to aggrandise themselves at the expense of weaker nations. The history of Belgium, Poland, Roumania, the Balkan States, and Greece shows this clearly enough. From the time of the Don Pacifico debate Mr. Gladstone took the general ground of the rights of small nations, and the duty of Europe as a whole to act collectively by international agreement for the general well-being. By sheer energy and even audacity he did more than any man outside Italy to lead European opinion on the nationalist movement in Italy. It was his action in 1870 which secured the position of Belgium. He reversed the Eastern policy of England. The reversal was accepted by Lord Salisbury and his successors as the backing of the "right horse."

Mr. John Bailey has recently written an article on Mr. Gladstone's foreign policy, which he denounces as a series of ignorant and unpopular failures. It is not worth while to examine this general allegation because Mr. Bailey does not support it by a scrap of fact. But he commits himself to a curious statement. "To foreign affairs he [Mr. Gladstone] never gave much either

of his intellect or his industry.”¹ This is quite untrue. Notoriously so in connection with the Opium Wars, his attack on Bomba, his mission to the Ionian Islands, the Franco-Prussian War, and the *Alabama* question. To the Eastern Question he gave years of close attention. From 1875 to 1880 no Foreign Minister studied every variety of official literature more closely or plunged more deeply into history than Mr. Gladstone. He was well informed when Mr. Disraeli as Prime Minister did not know elementary facts. But with the Eastern Question I deal elsewhere.

The soundness of a statesman’s foreign policy can only be tested by results in the countries concerned. Lord Beaconsfield played a leading part in the Eastern Question for five years ; but no trace of his work remains. The freedom and independence of the Balkan States were established by the policy of Mr. Gladstone and the military force of Russia. Not only in these states is Mr. Gladstone’s name still held in reverence. It is the same in Greece and Italy. Belgium remembers his intervention to safeguard her neutrality in the crisis of 1870. Resentment in America was long ago assuaged by the severe judgment Mr. Gladstone passed on himself for his unfortunate appreciation of Jefferson Davis’s position in 1862.

The settlement of the *Alabama* dispute became to him a matter of political life or death. “ If anything like a Government can be held together I will not shrink,” he wrote in his Diary on June 13, 1872.

He thought the award was harsh in extent and unjust in its basis, but it was a great settlement on a golden principle. “ We regard the fine imposed on this country ”, he said in 1880, “ as dust in the balance compared with the moral

¹ *Quarterly Review*, 1928.

value of the example set when these two great nations, England and America, which are among the most fiery and the most jealous in the world with regard to anything that touches national honour, went in peace and concord before a judicial tribunal to dispose of painful differences, rather than resort to the arbitrament of the sword."

What action of any statesman in any country before 1918 did more for the cause of peace? It was an action which, more than anything else, secured the good-will of America. It was the great and evidential precedent for the establishment of the League of Nations. Was this an "ignorant and unpopular failure"?

Mr. Gladstone was never at the Foreign Office. He was never identified with the set opinions that are so often mistaken for stable wisdom. But he had definite principles which underlay and gave consistency and strength to his actions. From 1855 he saw the hopelessness of Turkish rule in Europe, and stood for the liberation of the Balkan provinces. He was against all entanglements which presaged responsibilities and dangers outside the true and legitimate sphere of British action. He was opposed to war unless unmistakably for the purpose of liberty. His constant aim was the avoidance of provocative policy and action, whether by territorial acquisition, disregard of the rights and aspirations of other nations, or by the challenge of competitive armaments. When troubles nevertheless arose, his efforts were always for settlement by international action and agreement.

Critics say that his policy led to weakness and surrender. This I deny. Their leading case is the "surrender" to Russia in 1871 over the Black Sea. Russia had torn up the

Treaty of 1856 in a provocative circular when France and Germany were at war. The story is fully told by Lord Morley. Everyone agreed that the restrictions on Russia were wrong, and in the actual demands Russia was right. In the manner of her action she was grossly wrong. The British Government demanded the withdrawal of the circular. Germany and France gave their support. Then followed the London Conference of the leading Powers, the affirmation of treaty sacredness by the withdrawal of the circular, and international assent to the Russian case on its merits. Disraeli concurred by his silence. A more sensible result cannot be imagined, the only alternative being single-handed war with Russia in support of an impossible restriction which ought never to have been made.

The truth is that unfortunate results followed when Mr. Gladstone failed to insist on his own principles. When he came into office in 1880 he did not grasp the dangers of the Dual Control in Egypt, and of delaying to act at once in Transvaal affairs. It was too much even for his physical powers to wrestle at once with all the troubles and problems left to him by Lord Beaconsfield. As Chancellor of the Exchequer he placed finance on right lines, as Prime Minister he gave completion to the Treaty of Berlin, reversed the Tory policy in Afghanistan with good and lasting results, and grappled with the Irish difficulties which through six years the Conservatives had neglected. Because he did not apply his own principles to Egypt and the Transvaal, lamentable results followed.

But what other statesman in the nineteenth century formulated and for so long a time, and to so great an extent, acted on principles now generally accepted as fundamental and right? Canning certainly raised the level of thought and

action in his too brief day. Palmerston's slap-dash policy, usually, but not always, based on broad general sympathies, rested too much on the principle of *civis Romanus sum*. Lord Salisbury, learning experience from the failure of Lord Beaconsfield's Eastern policy, was subsequently, perhaps, the best Foreign Minister of the century. But it was Mr. Gladstone who, on two occasions, formulated the principles and methods of action which now, by general consent, are accepted as essential to the peace of the world.

I quote Professor Ramsay Muir's clear summary of the great speech at West Calder (1879) in which Mr. Gladstone laid down six principles.

The first of these principles was that the prime interest of the nation is the maintenance of peace. By this he did not mean merely abstention from war. Gladstone was an absolute pacifist, but held that some wars for liberty are both just and necessary. He meant active co-operation in the maintenance of peace throughout the world. His first principle was thus positive, not merely negative. The second was that peace can be maintained only by co-operation with other nations in the concert of Europe. The third was that we ought to avoid all specific alliances or entangling engagements such as we had made with Turkey: our only engagements should be with the whole concert of Powers, not with any section of them. The fourth was that our influence in this co-operation should always be used for the maintenance and extension of liberty. The fifth—inspired, doubtless, by memories of Palmerston—was that we have no right to dictate the course which ought to be pursued, and that any attempt to do so will be apt to endanger the very causes we desire to serve. And the sixth was that in international relations all nations ought to be treated as equals, having an equal right to be considered in matters which concern them—an assertion which directly challenged the accustomed dictatorship of the Five Great Powers.

Never have the foundations of a wise and peaceful foreign policy been stated with greater truth and precision. Let us cast back to 1870. Then

came a saying which rivalled in truth and depth anything Burke ever said or wrote. The Franco-Prussian War was raging.

One accomplishment yet remains needful to enable us to hold without envy our free and eminent position. It is that we should do as we would be done by, that we should seek to found a moral empire upon the confidence of the several peoples, not upon their fears, their passions or their antipathies. Certain it is that a new law of nations is gradually taking hold of the mind, and coming to sway the practice, of the world, a law which recognises independence, which frowns upon aggression, which favours the pacific, not the bloody settlement of disputes, which aims at permanent and not temporary adjustments, above all, which recognises as a tribunal of paramount authority, the general judgment of civilised mankind.¹

Truly a prophetic saying. Nearly fifty years later these words crystallised in the Covenant of the League of Nations. But Mr. Gladstone was not content to leave it in the realm of prophecy. Three years after he wrote the passage I have quoted, the *Alabama* Treaty was signed. Until the signing of the Covenant it was the greatest act and presage of peace in the history of nations.

In the effort to settle international disputes by agreement, and failing agreement by arbitration, who laboured more abundantly than Mr. Gladstone? He strove to create and maintain the Concert of Europe, cumbrous and uncertain as it was, as the only then available method for preserving peace. In competitive armaments he saw not only useless waste without security, but a menacing challenge and a grave danger. On that he fought Lord Palmerston, not without success, for six successive years. He had often, but always unwillingly, to make concession. It was England's duty to take the lead in reduction of armaments. Her advanced

¹ *Edinburgh Review*, October 1870

civilisation, her island position, her comparative freedom from the welter of European politics made it a moral obligation. The lead should be given even though it involved risk. Nations were ever ready to take the costly and bloody risks of war ; it was England's duty to take risks for peace.

Out of heated partisanship Mr. Gladstone's foreign policy is gradually but steadily emerging. Like others in the tangle of national and international affairs, at times he misjudged positions, committed errors, and had to learn by experience. Those who still pretend to look with contempt on his methods and action in foreign policy have to learn that what he taught and did his best to practise is true and enduring. Lord Beaconsfield may not have read a word of the West Calder speech ; Mr. Gladstone's forecast of the Covenant in 1870 may have passed almost unnoticed at the time ; his persistent fight against excessive and competitive armaments may have been ascribed to unreasoning zeal for economy ; but the deep and basic purpose to work for stable international peace and good-will is clear. His principles are now accepted as commonplace at Geneva, the Hague, and Washington. Had the truth of them been realised earlier the world would have been spared the catastrophe of the Great War.

In the contemplation of these matters, in a phrase of Lord Acton's, " you may hear the roll of the ages ".

* * * * *

On August 27, 1928, the General Pact for the renunciation of war was signed at Paris by France, Great Britain, the United States, Germany, Italy, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, the Union of South Africa, India, the Irish Free State,

and four other nations. *The Times* of August 30 prints the following account from its own correspondent :

Mr. Kellogg, the United States Secretary of State, and Mr. Cosgrave, President of the Executive Council of the Irish Free State, left the Gare Saint-Lazare by special train at 8 o'clock this morning. Mr. Kellogg was accompanied by the Counsellor and First Secretary of the United States Embassy as far as Le Havre, where he was received by M. Meyer, the Mayor, and other civil and military authorities.

Mr and Mrs. Kellogg were received on board the *Detroit* by Rear-Admiral Burrage, commanding the United States naval division in European waters, and by Captain White, in command of the cruiser. Shortly afterwards Mr Cosgrave left the train and was received on board the *Detroit* by Mr. Kellogg, while the ship's band played “God save the King.” At 11 30 the *Detroit* sailed for Kingstown, and as she left the harbour she exchanged salutes of 21 guns with the battery. Before embarking, Mr. Kellogg stated that he had been deeply touched by the reception given to him by the Government and the people of France.

Mr. and Mrs. Kellogg will return from Dublin to Cherbourg in the *Detroit*, and will sail for New York on Tuesday afternoon in the United States liner *Leviathan*. They will not land at Cherbourg, but will be transferred from the cruiser to the liner by a special tender.

Mr. Kellogg, America's Secretary of State, having signed the Pact, sails from Havre to receive the freedom of the city of Dublin. The President of the Irish Free State, Mr. Cosgrave, boards the U.S.S. *Detroit* as a guest and the band plays “God save the King”. Thus is brought to the mind international peace and good-will, free government in Ireland, the friendliness of the United States to the strains of the National Anthem. After thirty years.

PART II



INTRODUCTORY NOTE TO CHAPTER I

1875-1878

Towards the end of 1875 serious revolts took place in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Russia, Austria, and Germany prepared the Andrassy Note calling on the Porte to execute reforms. It was accepted by France and Italy, and by Mr. Disraeli in January 1876. The Porte refused to do anything.

In May the French and German consuls at Salonika were murdered by the Turks. Trouble spread to Serbia and Montenegro. The three Powers principally concerned, Russia, Austria, and Germany, drew up the Berlin Memorandum. Continued refusal to make reforms was to be followed by action. Italy and France accepted the Memorandum, but the British Cabinet rejected it on the ground that they had not been consulted. The Concert of Europe was thus broken up. The Government sent the British fleet to Besika Bay.

The British Government having set the example of isolated action, other countries took the cue. In June Serbia and Montenegro declared war against Turkey, and Russian volunteers poured in to their assistance.

In May there was an insurrection in Bulgaria, which was followed by massacre and outrage on a great scale by the Turks.

On July 31 Mr. Disraeli minimised and discredited the reports of the massacres as "coffee house babble". On September 6 Mr Gladstone published *Bulgarian Horrors*, and began his Eastern Question campaign.

In December a Conference was held by the Powers at Constantinople, Lord Salisbury representing Great Britain. The Sultan, to blind Europe, promulgated the futile Midhat Constitution. The Powers unanimously submitted their demands in a Protocol signed in London. The Porte refused all the demands.

From July 1876 to July 1878 the Government were almost exclusively engaged on the Eastern Question. Lord Beaconsfield declared the policy of the Government to be the "traditional" maintenance of the integrity and independence of the Ottoman Empire. The Queen took a strong anti-Russian and pro-Turkish line. During these two years the Queen was the driving force behind the Government.¹

In January 1877 she was proclaimed Empress of India at Delhi under the Royal Titles Act.

On April 21 Russia declared war against Turkey, and was joined by Roumania. England declared her neutrality conditionally on respect being paid to British interests in Egypt, the Persian Gulf, Constantinople, and the Bosphorus.

Mr Gladstone insisted that the Porte had lost all claim to support, that British influence should be employed on behalf of liberty and self-government in the disturbed provinces, by exacting from the Porte, through the Concert of Europe, the necessary reforms.

In July the advance of the Russian armies made the home position acute. The Cabinet was divided and nothing was done.

In December 1877 the Cabinet decided to summon Parliament on January 17, and to increase the military forces. Plevna was captured by Russia on December 9.

In January 1878 the fleet was ordered to go through the Dardanelles. Lord Carnarvon, for the second time, resigned. Lord Derby also resigned, but was induced to withdraw his resignation. An alliance with Austria was ineffectually sought. On a misleading telegram² from Sir H Layard, British Ambassador at Constantinople, the fleet was recalled to the entrance of the Dardanelles. The Queen urged that nevertheless it should be sent to Constantinople, but the Cabinet declined to do this. The Queen was insistent, and the fleet was sent a fortnight later, on February 9, into the Sea of Marmora. A vote of credit was asked for in the House of Commons.

¹ See Buckle's *Life of Disraeli*, and *Queen Victoria's Letters*, Second Series, vol. II.

² The Government sent the fleet into the Dardanelles to prevent Russia from making a private arrangement with Turkey to the exclusion of other Powers. Layard telegraphed that Russia and Turkey had agreed that the Straits question should be settled by the Congress and Russia. The fact was that the belligerents had agreed to settle the question themselves.

In March Russia and Turkey agreed to the Treaty of San Stefano, which set up a big and independent Bulgaria. The Government resolved to call out the reserves, bring Indian troops to Malta, and look out for a *place d'armes* in the Eastern Mediterranean. Lord Derby resigned, and Lord Salisbury became Foreign Minister.

Austria, with the approval of Bismarck, suggested a Congress at Vienna. The Cabinet demanded that the Treaty of San Stefano should be submitted to the Powers as a whole. Bismarck suggested that England and Russia should get together. This resulted in the secret Salisbury-Schouvaloff agreement. The question of the big Bulgaria was reserved. The Cabinet consented to give Batum to Russia, and also Bessarabia—taken from Roumania in exchange for the Dobrudscha. Russia undertook to submit the material points to the Congress. Bismarck, who had intervened as “the honest broker”, agreed to preside over a Congress at Berlin.

Meanwhile, the Cabinet had secretly arranged with Turkey the Anglo-Turkish Convention. Cyprus was to be given to England as a naval and military base at an annual payment of £92,000, and England undertook to guarantee the safety of Asiatic Turkey against Russia.

The Treaty of Berlin was signed on July 13, 1878.

CHAPTER I

THE EASTERN QUESTION

“ I think we cannot deny that our policy preceding the Conference, and our efforts in it, were to maintain the integrity and independence of the Ottoman Empire ”—LORD BEACONSFIELD to LORD DERBY, January 29, 1877

“ The Queen has seen Sir H. Elliot and must say she thinks what he says is very sensible. He is perfectly astounded at Mr Gladstone, his wildness, folly, and fury.”—QUEEN VICTORIA to LORD BEACONSFIELD, February 14, 1877.

“ He, the Emperor of Russia, has plunged his *own* nation as well as the Turkish Empire into *one of the most bloody wars* ever known, and which *no one* thought *possible* in this century. Under the cloak of RELIGION and under the pretence of obtaining just treatment for the so-called ‘Christians’ of the principalities, but who are far worse than the Musselmans, and who, moreover, had been *excited* to revolt by General Ignatief, who prevented regular troops being sent to quell the revolt, leading thereby to the so-called ‘Bulgarian atrocities’, as the irregular troops were sent out, this *war of extermination* (for that it is) has been iniquitously commenced ! ”—QUEEN VICTORIA, *Memorandum*, September 27, 1877.

THE heat engendered by five years’ controversy on the Eastern Question from 1876 has abated, but the fire is not extinct. That has been clearly proved by the publication of Mr Buckle’s *Life of Disraeli* in 1920, and by the comments on the last two volumes of Queen Victoria’s letters which he edited.

It is natural enough that the biographer should strongly support Mr. Disraeli against Mr. Gladstone. As editor, predilection outruns prudence. The Sovereign has full constitutional right to give her political views to her ministers, and publicity necessarily follows. But Queen Victoria is

brought in too often both in the biography and the official publication of Volumes II. and III. of the Second Series as the active and avowed advocate of Mr. Disraeli's policy, in unconcealed condemnation not only of Mr. Gladstone's views, but of his personal conduct and motives.

In Volume III., after Mr. Gladstone took office, his own letters in answer to the Queen are published. That steadies the position to some extent. But on the Eastern Question his own reasons and arguments are never given. He is held up to condemnation and ridicule as if everything he said was foolish and wrong. The election of 1880, which showed that a vast majority of the British people agreed with Mr. Gladstone, is treated as an unexpected and calamitous incident, and due only to the folly of a misguided electorate. The Queen's political views proved to be in direct opposition to the feeling of the country. It follows therefore that she is herself involved controversially in a great national issue. Mr. Buckle shows that the keen desire of the Queen was in effect adherence to the old Crimean policy. At times Mr. Disraeli himself, as we shall see, had to follow her lead.

Throughout, Mr. Gladstone is Mr. Buckle's special target. He is at pains to contrast patience with precipitancy, brilliancy in speech and writing with dull verbosity, quiet judgment with emotional rashness, and the glories of success with the failure of incompetence. He is a fine stage manager. The Queen herself is the chief witness against Mr. Gladstone, and the case is picturesquely backed by royalties and great personages, though never by any solid body of opinion. The real question, the only one that matters, is, what is the truth.

I am not here concerned with the comparative

merits and attractiveness of the two protagonists. Mr. Gladstone pounded away in Parliament and on the platform for the avowed purpose of defeating what he conceived to be the wrong policy of the Government—a subject naturally of little interest to the readers of to-day. Mr. Disraeli, one of the most fascinating personalities in British history, concentrated and displayed in the five years of strife the high qualities of the novelist and statesman who for so long a time had excited admiration, wrath, mystification, and always intense interest.

To the two critical years of this one episode Mr. Buckle devotes 360 pages. There is not a dull passage. Wrong from the root as his policy was, Lord Beaconsfield emerges from the final crisis as—for a brief time—the central figure in Europe. How was it done?

The events of 1875-76 are directly linked with the great error of the Crimean War. The Porte in 1854 had proved its utter incapacity to govern Christian provinces in Europe. It matters little now whether or not Russia had at the time ulterior motives in her intervention. The standing danger was Turkish misgovernment. The British Government, knowing this, made the fatal mistake of trusting the Sublime Porte. The Russian power had been broken in the Crimea. Through the action of the allies the well-being of the Christian provinces was left to depend on the fulfilment by Turkey of Article IX. of the Treaty of Paris, 1856.

As Article IX. was the basis and explanation of Lord Beaconsfield's policy in 1876, I quote it.

*Amelioration of Condition of Christian Population of
Ottoman Empire*

Art. IX. His Imperial Majesty the Sultan, having, in his constant solicitude for the welfare of his subjects, issued

a Firman which, while ameliorating their condition without distinction of Religion or of Race, records his generous intentions towards the Christian population of his Empire, and wishing to give a further proof of his sentiments in that respect, has resolved to communicate to the Contracting Parties the said Firman, emanating spontaneously from his Sovereign will

“ Spontaneous emanation ” was truly humorous.

Non-interference of Allies in Internal Affairs of Ottoman Empire

The Contracting Powers recognise the high value of this communication. It is clearly understood that it cannot, in any case, give to the said Powers the right to interfere, either collectively or separately, in the relations of his Majesty the Sultan with his subjects, nor in the Internal Administration of his Empire.¹

At a heavy cost the allies abolished Russia's rights of intervention² on behalf of the Christian provinces ; accepted the preposterous promises of the Sublime Porte ; forbade any interference by the Powers singly and collectively in the Sultan's relations with his subjects ; and secured to that humorist twenty years of absolute peace. In return for all this the Turk showed his contempt for his allies by enjoying the comforts of his security, and continuing his hopeless mismanagement. The heavy sacrifices of the Crimean War proved absolutely barren of satisfactory results.

¹ Treaty of Paris, 1856.

² Turkey in 1774 by the Treaty of Kainardji gave to Russia the rights of making remonstrances and representations on behalf of the Christian subjects of the Porte. In 1854 Russia justified her action against Turkey by these rights. This made Mr Gladstone hesitate in accepting the war policy. Article IX. of the Treaty of Paris abrogated these rights and by this placed a moral responsibility on the contracting Powers to see that effect was given to the Sultan's firman for ameliorating the conditions of his Christian subjects. Turkey entirely failed to discharge her treaty obligations, and when the Bulgarian massacres occurred, Mr. Gladstone, as the only surviving member in the House of Commons of the Aberdeen cabinet, made this responsibility a leading justification of his intervention.

Mr. Disraeli, having learnt nothing from the Crimean War, based his whole policy in regard to Turkey on the maintenance of this preposterous and discredited article.

The Bulgarian massacres are all-important in the study of the Eastern Question from 1876 onwards, because in large measure they influenced Russian action and aroused public feeling in England. They have passed into history. But as the facts are still being distorted in support of often disproved charges that Bulgarian horrors were worked up and indeed almost invented by Mr. Gladstone for his political purposes I am forced to state as briefly as I can what occurred.

As they revive some issues which are not necessary to the main story of political developments I will deal with them at the outset.

The massacres occurred in May 1876 following an ineffectual Bulgarian rising against Turkish rule, in a region only about 100 miles from the British Embassy at Constantinople.

On June 28 the *Daily News* published its famous report, and on the 26th Mr. W. E. Forster asked a question in the House of Commons. Mr. Disraeli replied that his information did not justify the statements in the *Daily News*. In an off-hand manner he stated that persons called Bashibazouks and Circassians were settled in the country and had a stake in it. They were attacked by *invaders* and had to defend themselves! The war, if it was to be called a war, was carried on with great ferocity. No other information being given by the Government, Mr. Forster again, on July 10, asked a question on allegations of torture and other brutalities. Mr. Disraeli said they were almost daily in communication with the Ambassador, Sir H. Elliot. No doubt in a war of insurrection there must be atrocities. He doubted

whether torture had been practised on a great scale among an Oriental people who seldom, he believed, resorted to torture, but generally terminated their connection with culprits in a more expeditious manner. There was laughter from the Government benches at this sally.

On July 17 Mr. Disraeli made a long statement. He admitted there had been atrocities. He ridiculed some grotesque exaggerations which appeared to have come from Constantinople. He pictured the whole episode as belonging to an insurrectionary war for which the Turkish Government was not responsible. With this account Parliament for the time had to be satisfied. But one fact emerged from Mr. Disraeli's speech. It was not till July 18—nearly two months after the massacres—that the Government directed the British Ambassador to make inquiry into the allegations.

On July 31 there was an important debate in the House of Commons. Again Mr. Disraeli referred to "atrocities *alleged* to have been committed in consequence of the invasion of Bulgaria". A statement absurdly inaccurate. The "invaders" were the Bashi-Bazouks, Turkish irregular cavalry, sent into Bulgaria by the Turkish Government to deal at their own sweet will with insurrectionary Bulgarian inhabitants.

I come now to the famous phrase "coffee house babble". Here are Mr. Disraeli's words :

A consul hears, and no doubt truly, that there has been some extremely wild work on the part of some of the Bashi-Bazouks, and he engages someone to go to a coffee house frequented by these ruffians, where he listens to the reports of the wild work that has been going on. One present says "5000 or 6000 must have perished innocently," when another answers "if you had said 25,000 or 26,000 you would have been more correct," as if exulting in the carnage.

Now we know very well how difficult it is even in civilised nations with a well-organised police to obtain accurate information on such points, and how frequently we hear of 100,000 men having assembled on a public occasion when subsequent inquiry showed that the number was not more than 10,000. *I was not justified for a moment to adopt that coffee house babble brought by an anonymous Bulgarian to a consul as at all furnishing a basis of belief that the accounts subsequently received had any justification*

By this statement Mr. Disraeli led the country to believe that he had refused to take reports seriously because they were only based on the babble of an anonymous imaginary Bulgarian to a consul not named. This evasive passage is not even consistent. While Mr. Disraeli justified his own action because he had only the evidence of an anonymous Bulgarian, he himself says that the consul had heard "*no doubt truly*" that there had been extremely wild work by the Bashi-Bazouks. He speaks of the difficulty of getting evidence. The British Consul had only to go a few miles to Batak or Boyadzik to see streets of burnt houses and thousands of festering corpses. "It *was* coffee house babble," triumphantly exclaims Mr. Buckle. The Queen, the Prince of Wales, the Conservative party all took the cue that the whole story of the atrocities was only coffee house babble. From that time the massacres were held to have been grossly exaggerated or even non-existent. Years afterwards in the *National Biography* Mr. Kebbel says: "These outrages were discovered shortly afterwards to have been either gross exaggerations or *pure inventions*!"

Consequently torrents of wrath fell on Mr. Gladstone. Even to this day it is said that he worked up a great agitation on fictitious evidence.

What was the truth? Mr. Disraeli did not

say in words that the alleged massacres were fabulous. Babble was limited to the curiously indefinite information he had gathered through a consul, namely, that of an anonymous Bulgarian.

He spoke on July 31. On June 23 the *Daily News* had just published an alarming report from Mr. Pears, their able and responsible correspondent on the spot. On June 26 Lord Derby, the Foreign Secretary, seeing what the Prime Minister refused to see, had promised inquiry. On July 8 a further report from Mr. Pears—not an anonymous Bulgarian—confirmed and extended his first report to the *Daily News*. Subsequently it became known then on June 14 Vice-Consul Brophy had reported to the British Ambassador at Constantinople the massacre of some 2000 men, women, and children at Boyadzik alone by Shefket Pasha!

Mr. Disraeli conjured up imaginary talks in Bulgarian coffee houses to account for his own cynical procrastination through June and July. He had not moved because he wished to shield the Turk.

The actual number of persons killed was probably between 10,000 and 15,000. Foreign Office authorities estimate it at about 12,000. Mr. Schuyler, the American Consul, in his official report, from personal inquiries on the spot in July, puts it at 15,000. This was the highest figure quoted by Mr. Gladstone.

I made inquiry at Sofia. A careful report was made by M. Petré Dimitroff¹ which can be accepted as approximately accurate. It is as follows :

¹ Professor at Robert College, Constantinople; he served in various capacities under the Bulgarian Government, and was associated with Mr. Schuyler in his inquiry.

| | |
|------------------------------------|--------|
| Men, women, and children massacred | 15,000 |
| Villages burnt and destroyed | 72 |
| Churches and schools destroyed | 200 |
| Monasteries destroyed | 10 |

Cases of violation amounted to thousands, but the actual number could not be ascertained

The Baring report (Sept. 1, 1876), written with great impartiality, details the horrible brutalities of May.

Mr. Disraeli led the House to believe that there was nothing to choose between Bashi-Bazouks and Bulgarians. Mr. Baring gave precise figures. The Bulgarians in this insurrection killed 151 men and 12 women and children.

It matters not to the main question whether the number of Bulgarians killed was 12,000 or 15,000. Three thousand eight hundred houses were destroyed. Thousands of people were mercilessly beaten. Tens of thousands were homeless. Many women were taken to Turkish harems. Large areas were desolated.¹

The agitation in England was increased ten-fold because of the Prime Minister's evasions, and the delay in ordering an official inquiry until two months had passed. The country was left to get the best information it could from the American Consul and Mr. Pears, the correspondent of the *Daily News*. It was difficult enough for them to get at exact particulars in a ruined country infested by Turkish murderers, but Baring's report proves conclusively the truth of their main charges. Achmet Agha, the responsible Turkish official engaged in the massacres, was rewarded for his services by the Order of the Medjidie !

It is fair to note that Mr. Buckle speaks frankly about the massacres :

¹ For details in the Baring and Schuyler reports, see Appendix III.

The massacres and outrages which had marked the insurrection were avenged a hundredfold. Thousands perished and many villages were ravaged and destroyed. Peculiarly heinous atrocities were perpetrated at the hill town of Batak, every house in it was burnt and five thousand people were slaughtered, neither age nor sex being spared.¹

If anyone is disposed to challenge what I have said I refer him to the pages of Hansard and to "Correspondence respecting the Affairs of Turkey 1876" (c. 1640), *Accounts and Papers*, Vol. XC.

Disaffection in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the excitement in Serbia and Montenegro, had roused the attention of the three Great Powers primarily concerned—Germany, Austria, and Russia. In the Andrassy Note Turkey was called upon to execute reforms. In company with France and Italy, the British Government signed the Note.

The Turk was obdurate; nothing was done. Then came the murder of the French and German consuls at Salonika in May (1876). The three Great Powers again initiated action in the Berlin Memorandum, which called on the Turkish Government, under the threat of force, to execute reforms. France and Italy concurred. Mr. Disraeli refused to sign.

This was a blunder of the first magnitude. The flimsy excuse was made that Great Britain should have been consulted. The Queen wrote to the German Empress to explain the action of the Government, and William I. replied through the same medium. He remarked caustically that he would have wished to receive some counter-proposal. As the British Government had agreed to the Andrassy Note, the three Powers had good

¹ *Life of Disraeli*, vi p. 41.

reason to expect agreement with the Memorandum.

The Government followed one blunder by another. They were not going to be hurried into forcible measures against Turkey. On May 24 they sent the fleet to Besika Bay. Having rejected the Concert of Europe, they went to the opposite extreme—isolated action. This was described grandiosely by the Prime Minister as a policy of determination. It certainly determined the Turks to do nothing in the way of reform.

In May came the massacres of Bulgarians by Bashi-Bazouks. Serbia and Montenegro went to war with Turkey.

By the rejection of the Berlin Memorandum, the Government broke up the Concert of Europe and took isolated action. Russia, taking the cue, went to war with Turkey. The "determination" of Mr. Disraeli then evaporated.

The Besika manœuvre and the personal policy of Mr. Disraeli to defend the integrity and independence of Turkey at once started acute disagreements in the Cabinet which persisted for a period of nearly two years—fully described by Mr. Buckle. Had Mr. Gladstone been Prime Minister this period would have been proclaimed as one of humiliating and disastrous vacillation.

Mr. Gladstone cordially approved the action of the Government in accepting the Andrassy Note. Still more cordially would he have supported the acceptance of the Berlin Memorandum.

As it was, the Sultan hailed its rejection as a proof of friendship. The despatch of the fleet to Besika Bay he looked upon as a further proof that the British Government rejected the proposal of the Great Powers to back demands on him by force. He felt safe, and contemptuously refused

Russian demands. Mr. Disraeli made much of the new Turkish Parliament. Turkey was going to reform itself. The ridiculous Parliament, under the Midhat constitution, met once, and never again.

It is notable that the Queen disagreed at this time with the policy of her ministers in grave and weighty words.

It is true that the three Europeans have acted without taking the other Powers into their deliberations. But their interests are more intimately and more vitally connected with the welfare of Turkey than those of England, France and Italy. The Queen's dislike to our separating ourselves from the rest arises from a fear that Turkey will look to us to help her against the rest of Europe, and that we shall thus precipitate rather than prevent the catastrophe.¹

Wise and true words. No one has been able to give any intelligible explanation of Mr. Disraeli's foolish and short-sighted action. If the *spretæa injuria formæ* argument had anything in it the Government should have rejected the Andrassy Note. Here is Lord Carnarvon's account, which shows that already there were dissensions in the Cabinet :

We came to the Berlin Memorandum with an uneasy, doubtful, and, above all, divided Cabinet . . . The Cabinet was very—entirely—ignorant of the real nature of the question which was coming on us. I, though I had some opportunities which others had not, was not fully alive to the bearings of the then . . . circumstances, and I am sure that a large majority . . . such as Cross, Richmond, Hunt, J Manners were . . . totally ignorant.²

To the Note the Government said Yes, to the Memorandum, No. They followed up this quick change by the Besika menace and the declaration

¹ *Queen Victoria's Letters*, Second Series, vol ii p 453

² *Haldine's Life of Carnarvon*, vol ii p. 329.

that they based their policy on the integrity and independence of Turkey. They backed the wrong horse without calculating the odds, placed themselves in a thoroughly false position, watched a bloody war—which arose out of and smashed their own policy—and brought upon themselves the condemnation of the country in 1880.

Emphatic as that condemnation was, it is well to remember in passing that the election was fought on the restricted county franchise. Had the Act of 1885 been in existence the Liberal victory would have been far more overwhelming.

Because in Mr. Buckle's publications not even the briefest account is given of Mr. Gladstone's policy in contradistinction to Mr. Disraeli let us for a moment see what it was.

Mr. Gladstone had learnt the lesson of the Crimean War.

He had given his support to that war with great misgiving. It was his first responsible introduction to European politics. He had no hostility to the Ottoman Turks. But the rule of the Porte—the Turkish Government—degenerate, remorseless, ever plotting, he looked upon as “full of anomaly, misery and difficulty”; it was the “solecism of Mahomedans exercising despotic rule over twelve million Christians”. His severe criticisms in 1854 of our “good old ally” brought him for a time into serious trouble.

He knew, and Lord Aberdeen knew, that the Treaty of Kainardji gave Russia a definite *locus standi* for interference on behalf of the Balkan principalities.¹ But he, like others, exaggerated the dangers of Russian action, and acted on the delusion that intervention to maintain the “independence and integrity” of the Turkish Empire

¹ See note on the Treaty, p. 119.

would be the shortest road for securing equal civil and religious rights for the Christian provinces.

Promises and firmans followed the defeat of Russia, and for a time the Turk held his hand. From 1858 Mr. Gladstone strongly supported the union of Moldavia and Wallachia, and Roumania gained something like independence in 1861.

When the Bulgarian massacres occurred in 1876 he stood on the position he held after the Crimean War. He felt himself specially responsible as the sole survivor in the House of Commons of the Government which had prevented Russian interference and had not secured for the subject provinces civil and religious liberty. The old policy of maintaining in Europe the cruel despotism of the Turk had broken down and must be abandoned once and for all. Bag and baggage they must clear out of Bulgaria. The outrageous domination of the Turkish Government in Europe must cease. That was the main issue.

Here I must make a digression. Mr. Gladstone's opponents find it convenient to assert that the "Bulgarian" agitation was initiated by him, and that he was wholly responsible for it. This is not true. Occurrences in Bulgaria and the callousness of the Government had profoundly stirred the country before the publication of *Bulgarian Horrors* on September 6, 1876. Mr. Gladstone himself had not realised this. The people were already demanding a lead from the Liberal party. After the publication feeling became red-hot.

At the end of September Mr. Gladstone left home for a series of private visits. In some cases his hosts were Conservative, and any political demonstrations in connection with his movements were the very last thing he desired. What happened? Mr. Gladstone records it in his Diary.

Sept. 22 Raby Castle. Endeavouring hard to fight off a meeting and speech at Staindrop.

Sept. 23 Went down to Staindrop and was forced to go into the hall and make a speech, sorely against my will, for if this sort of thing goes on I shall seem a rogue and impostor

Sept. 30 Off to Langton Great warmth all the way. I was obliged to say a few words to the people at Coldstream.

Oct. 2. To Alnwick. Deputation and address from Dundee At every town I reached there were keen expressions of the public feeling which it was impossible to escape I never saw the like on any former occasion Langton, Dundee, Berwick, Alnwick all the same

Oct. 5. To Jervaux Abbey. The same feelings were again manifested as we went along our route, though it was without notice

Oct. 6. Abbey illuminated at night by tar barrels and such like

Oct. 7. To Castle Howard, enthusiastically drawn in by a large number of most hearty people.

On November 17 he went to Liverpool to see *Hamlet*. "I never was so well received in that town."

He had not made a speech in the country except the two informal utterances under compulsion. The interest and already even the excitement over the Eastern Question was spontaneous and genuine. I follow it up.

1877. *Jan 17.* To Longleat. Visited Bristol Cathedral on the way. A large party of Eastern sympathisers.

Jan. 23. Wells, etc. Cannot be greater hospitality, but the privacy, Alas

Jan. 24. Taunton—amid much popular enthusiasm

Jan 27. Taunton. Warm reception. I spoke All along the road one and the same excitement prevailed about the E.Q. of which I am made the local symbol At Glastonbury above all the sympathy was enthusiastic. The triumphal procession escorted us though it rained hard. I could not but get out and thank them in a few sentences.

Again it was all spontaneous. Mr. Gladstone was not on the stump. He spoke at Taunton, and received an address at Frome. The popular feeling was not roused by any speeches of his because, excepting at Taunton, he had made none. It was roused because of the brutalities in Bulgaria, resentment at the callous words of the Prime Minister in the House of Commons, and because once more the country was being committed to the discredited policy—the integrity and independence of Turkey. Already the Cabinet itself was divided. Lord Beaconsfield's own colleagues, as we shall see, opposed his policy. During July, August, and September over 400 public meetings were held in protest against the atrocities¹

The country saw that we were drifting towards war for a wrong object, and sympathy with the Christian provinces was general. These are indisputable facts. Mr. Gladstone did not start the agitation. Later, he gave to it force and direction. But the agitation was spontaneous and was due to the policy of the Government itself.

Mr. Buckle himself is a conclusive witness :

At this juncture [about Sept 6] the atrocity agitation being *in full swing* but comparatively ineffective because leaderless, Disraeli's great rival returned in good earnest "from Elba" to put himself at its head.²

Mr. Gladstone's pamphlet *Bulgarian Horrors* was only published on September 6 !

To be accurate, Mr. Gladstone did not take a leading part for some months after the agitation, according to Mr. Buckle's evidence, was in full swing.

¹ *The Sequence of Events*, J. E. Ellis, M.P. (Dunn and Fry, Notting-ham)

² Buckle's *Life of Disraeli*, vol. vi. p. 54.

Meanwhile London society was with Lord Beaconsfield. I give one more entry.

1878 March 11 Went to the Levy The Princess [sic [?] The Prince of Wales] for the first time received me dryly The Duke of Cambridge black as thunder did not even hold out his hand Prince Christian could not but follow suit. This is not very hard to bear.

This digression, now finished, is necessary because Mr. Gladstone was charged by high personages, and indeed still is charged by lesser people, with having got up the agitation and with having deluded the country.

What *was* the explanation of Lord Beaconsfield's quite impossible policy? Clearly the rejection of the Berlin Memorandum did not arise out of any considered Eastern policy. Replying to the Queen's strictures for once in a way Lord Beaconsfield speaks pontifically to her :

To escape isolation by consenting to play a secondary part does not become Your Majesty; and is a short-sighted policy, for leading to frequent humiliation, it ultimately occasions wars, which are neither just nor necessary

This stilted utterance was singularly unfortunate. What he wished to avoid at once happened. Serbia and Montenegro took up arms against Turkey. Russia, prevented by Lord Beaconsfield's pomposity from concerted action, also declared war in April.

Why did he reject the Queen's sound advice? Mr. Buckle gives no reasonable explanation.

Russian volunteers poured into Serbia. In May 1877 Russia crossed the Turkish frontier. For a year Lord Beaconsfield helplessly watched the conflagration which he might have prevented.

Yet it is inconceivable that any statesman even of average capacity will deliberately do the wrong

thing merely because personally he thought he had not been properly consulted. Other considerations must have come into play.

A spirited foreign policy contrasting with the internationalism of Mr. Gladstone was essential. Mr Gladstone had submitted the *Alabama* claims to arbitration. With the other Powers he had agreed that the Black Sea restrictions on Russia should not be enforced ; he had safeguarded Belgium in concert with France and Germany. This, to Lord Beaconsfield, was playing a secondary part in European politics. About his policy there must be no taint of following the foreigner. England must assert herself. The foreigner, even when primarily concerned, must come cap in hand to the Prime Minister of the British Empire. "Peace rests on the presence not to say the ascendancy of England in the councils of Europe."¹ The rejection of the Berlin Memorandum was an early manifestation of the ascendancy spirit. Again, Lord Beaconsfield's sympathies from the first were strongly for the Turk. The Queen held sound views—not markedly pro-Turkish—until the Russian bogey appeared. Alike in his attitude to the Bulgarian massacres and the Berlin Memorandum Lord Beaconsfield was definitely pro-Turkish. Mr. Buckle contests the belief that he was influenced by views on Eastern conditions expressed in *Tancred*—published in 1847—on the ground that his special sympathies were with the Arabs and not with the Turks. The argument is not conclusive. Historical and ethnological distinctions between Saracens, Arabs, Moguls, Turks, and the Ottoman Turks do not suggest easy lines of distinction. The Caliphate at Bagdad long centuries ago had become a shadow. The spiritual

¹ Lord Beaconsfield's letter to the Duke of Marlborough, March 8, 1880.

leadership of the Moslems had passed *de facto* to the Sultan. Anything like coercion of the Sultan, who claimed to be Caliph and who drew his fighting-men from Asia, endangered visions or schemes of joint action with Syria, Palestine, and Arabia.

However this may be, the point is interesting. Eminent statesmen in speeches, letters, memoranda, and fugitive pieces have generally left almost too much material showing causes and development of their views and explanations of their policy and action.

Lord Beaconsfield made comparatively few speeches, and rarely wrote explanatory memoranda and letters. He still remains a stimulating enigma. It is not surprising then that both Mr. Monypenny and Mr. Buckle rake Lord Beaconsfield's novels for information essential to the biographer.

I turn, therefore, for a moment to *Tancred*.

Tancred, at night, looks over the Thames.

Before him softened by the hour was the Isle of Dogs ! The Isle of Dogs ! It should at least be Cyprus.

He talks with the young emir, Fakredeen.

"If I were an Arab in race as well as in religion," said *Tancred*, "I would not pass my life in schemes to govern some mountain tribes."

"I'll tell you," said the Emir, springing from his divan, and flinging the tube of his nargilly to the other end of the tent, "the game is in our hands if we had energy. There is a combination which would entirely change the whole face of the world, and bring back Empire to the East. Though you are not brother of the Queen, you are nevertheless a great English prince, and the Queen will listen to what you say, especially if you talk to her as you talk to me, and say such fine things in such a beautiful voice. Nobody ever opened my mind like you. You will magnetise the Queen as you have magnetised me. Go back to

England and arrange this . . . Let the Queen of the English collect a great fleet, let her stow away all her treasure, bullion, gold plate, and precious arms, be accompanied by all her court and chief people, and transfer the seat of her empire from London to Delhi. There she will find an immense empire ready made, a first-rate army, and a large revenue. . . . I will take care of Syria and Asia Minor. The only way to manage the Afghans is by Persia and by the Arabs. We will acknowledge the Empress of India as our suzerain, and secure for her the Levantine coast ”

Lastly :

“ I could settle the Eastern question in a month if I were disposed,” said Fakredeen

Mr. Consul-General Laurella smiled superciliously, and then said, “ But the question is, what is the Eastern question ? ”

“ For my part,” said Hillel Besso, in a most epigrammatic manner, “ I do not see the use of settling anything.”

“ The Eastern question is, who shall govern the Mediterranean ? ” said the Emir.

Some thirty years later came the purchase of the Suez Canal shares, and the establishment of the Dual Control in Egypt. The Prince of Wales represents the Queen at a great pageant in Delhi. The Queen, by the Royal Titles Act, becomes Empress of India. We see the design of an aggressively scientific frontier in Afghanistan. British agents are suggested for Herat and Candahar. Cyprus is acquired to dominate the Levant and be the base for the prevention of Russian aggression in Asia. Eastern Roumelia is handed back to the Turk to prevent Russian interference in the control of the Mediterranean. The famous phrase “ coffee house babble ” originates in *Tancred*.¹ Does not Lord Beaconsfield throughout magnetise the Queen with his beautiful voice ?

¹ Page 337.

Mr. Monypenny¹ gives suggestive information.

Thirty years later Disraeli told Jowett that he still liked *Tancred* the best of his novels. That is easy to understand. It embodied those deeper dreams which had not yet faded, and which *he was still trying to realise* [My italics]. In 1877 he was far closer to the spirit of *Tancred* than to that of *Lothair* which had been published a few years before. He once told someone else that when he wanted to refresh his knowledge of the East, he read *Tancred*².

All this is very interesting and suggestive.

Mr. Buckle definitely says that the maintenance of the integrity and independence of the Turkish Empire was the basis of Mr. Disraeli's policy. No justification of that policy is to be found in the affairs and interests of Europe or intentions of leading European statesmen. It is difficult to put aside the theory that Asiatic pre-dilections warped Lord Beaconsfield's judgment and obscured his insight in 1876.

Mr. Buckle makes one admission which goes deep. "Mr. Gladstone had the insight to discern the makings of a nation in down-trodden Bulgaria." This, he says, Mr. Disraeli took insufficiently into account. To be quite accurate, he did not take it into account at all.

But I leave the difficult speculation of what exactly was in Lord Beaconsfield's mind. His policy was in fact the integrity of Turkey. The Cabinet declined to agree. This explains the impotence of the Government until the British fleet was sent through the Dardanelles in January 1878.

Mr. Disraeli attempted to reproduce the Crimean situation. The Cabinet was so hopelessly divided that a clear, consistent policy was

¹ Mr. Monypenny wrote the first two volumes of Mr. Disraeli's life, and part of the third.

² *Life of Disraeli*, vol. iii. p. 48

impossible. Resignations threatened, withdrawn, effected, postponed, accomplished, occupy many of Mr. Buckle's pages.

The Russian ultimatum to Turkey in April 1877 had one important result. The Queen, who had been in strong opposition to the Prime Minister on the rejection of the Berlin Memorandum, now became a vehement and unflinching supporter of the integrity of Turkey in all its implications, in root-and-branch antipathy to Russia. Heart and soul she distrusted Russia. Her dislike, and even hatred, became a passion. She went farther and faster than Lord Beaconsfield. Again and again she blames him for inaction. She even hints at abdication. She wrote memoranda which she directed the Prime Minister to read to a lagging Cabinet, and sometimes with marked results. At this stage she was the impelling force on and through the Prime Minister. Lord Beaconsfield, though frequently under fire himself, did not lose her favour. Camellias, violets, primroses, and the Windsor uniform are sent to him. In the thick of an anxious situation she insists on her favourite minister sitting to her favourite artist.¹ In December 1877 she went to stay with him at Hughenden. When affairs looked very black, she offered the Garter, which was discreetly declined. The facts of all these events are frankly and fully given by Mr. Buckle.

In these high quarters Mr. Gladstone now meets his fate. Disraeli characterises him as Tartuffe, "an unprincipled maniac," never a gentle-

¹ Lord Beaconsfield's description of the sitting, in a letter to Lady Bradford, is too good to omit.

"Von Angeli's studio is in the Queen's private dining room, and it is furnished, and entirely fitted up with the Pagoda furniture of the Brighton Pavilion. The fantastic scene, the artist himself, very good looking, picturesque and a genius, the P. Minister seated in a crimson chair on a stage, and the Private Secretary reading the despatches would make a good *genre* picture" (*Life of Disraeli*, vol. vi. p. 136).

man. The Queen turns her back once and for all on Mr. Gladstone. In February 1877 she writes of his "wildness, fury and folly". The old feeling of personal regard had gone, never to return. Yet Mr. Gladstone was on the right path and the Queen was on the wrong one.

Acclaimed by the court and society, with a darkening horizon and a divided Cabinet, Lord Beaconsfield continued imperturbably to write his inimitable letters *pari passu* to Lady Bradford and the Queen. Mr. Gladstone's conclusive arguments passed unanswered and unheeded. Age and illness were reducing Lord Beaconsfield's powers. In October he had written pathetically to Lady Bradford: "I am very ill. . . . When I say I am ill I mean it. I leave this place . . . in no degree better, as regards the main and only suffering—asthma. I am now inhaling night and day; a last desperate effort and futile." Against increasing weakness he fought with indomitable courage. The complex position at home and abroad required a strong clear lead which he had not the physical strength to give. How else can the hopeless confusion in his own Cabinet be explained? ¹

In a letter to the Queen of November 3, 1877, dissensions, now at their zenith, are summarised by the Prime Minister.

In a Cabinet of twelve men there were seven parties.

1. For war, "pure and simple", Hardy, John Manners, and Hicks-Beach.

2. For war, if Russia would not engage not to occupy Constantinople, the Lord Chancellor, Cross, W. H. Smith, and the Duke of Richmond

3. For war, if after the signature of peace the Russians would not evacuate Constantinople, Lord Salisbury

¹ *Life of Disraeli*, vi. p. 190.

4 For "peace at any price", Lord Derby

5 For an unselfish policy, considered by Lord Beaconsfield as futile and almost silly, Sir Stafford Northcote.

6 For the permanent occupation of Constantinople by Russia, Lord Carnarvon

7. "The 7th policy is that of your Majesty and which will be introduced and enforced to his utmost by the Prime Minister"¹

Clearly, Mr. Gladstone made no mistake in considering that he had to counterwork the personal policy of Lord Beaconsfield.

Was there ever a stranger position? What was the mystical seventh? Evidently Lord Beaconsfield did not know, for he immediately told the Queen that "in the first place the Cabinet should decide on something". At this very time the Conservative party were busy in proclaiming the patriotic regard of the Government for British interests, as shown by their spirited policy. How different was this strong and united policy from Liberal vacillation under the leadership of the unprincipled Mr. Gladstone!

What were the actual facts? Lord Beaconsfield had declared for a policy which was denounced by his leading colleagues in the Cabinet in the spirit and almost the letter of Mr. Gladstone's speeches in the country.

The favourite minister² was still determined to enforce the policy of the Queen, which was his own. Unfortunately, he could not see clearly what it was. Turkish integrity and independence was being ground to pieces in the jaws of the Russian bear. But the Cabinet had to "decide on something". So the spirited policy was boiled down and Lord Beaconsfield defined the "something" as a notification to Russia that

¹ *Life of Disraeli*, vi p. 194.

² It is curious that Mr. Buckle should so often emphasise this phrase. The favourites of monarchs have not shone in history.

British neutrality could not be depended upon without a secret and written engagement from Russia not to occupy Constantinople and the Dardanelles. In public, the heroic menace of war against Russia. In private, a secret agreement with the arch-enemy, not for the preservation of Turkish integrity, but that Russia should not occupy the Turkish capital. Lord Beaconsfield knew well enough that as Germany and Austria would never have agreed to the Russian occupation of Constantinople he was on very safe ground. The "something" was to lead eventually to the Salisbury-Schouvaloff agreement.

For the present the confusion in the Cabinet continued. No action was taken. Plevna fell, and the Russians bore down on Constantinople.

All is confused and perplexing [wrote the Prime Minister in January 1878]. Lord Beaconsfield believes all his colleagues are on their knees to Lord Carnarvon to stay.¹ The Cabinet wants a little of your Majesty's fire.

The Queen responded promptly on January 10, and sent the fire.

She feels she cannot, as she said before, remain the Sovereign of a country that is letting itself down to kiss the feet of the great barbarians . . . she is utterly ashamed of the Cabinet. . . . Oh, if the Queen were a man she would like to go and give those Russians whose word one cannot believe, such a beating.

She writes a memorandum to be read to the Cabinet.

Next day the fire operated, after three most stormy hours. Ministers bowed to the fire on the Cabinet altar. The Sultan's leave was to be asked for the fleet to anchor in the Dardanelles,

¹ Lord Carnarvon has said that no one in the country was insane enough to desire the repetition of the Crimean War—a statement vindicated by Lord Salisbury (*Life of Disraeli*, vol. vi. p. 213).

and the Russians were to be asked to give an assurance that they would not occupy Gallipoli. How the fleet went to and fro from the Dardanelles has been already told.¹

On February 7 the Queen wrote no fewer than three "hortatory" letters to Lord Beaconsfield, who on the 9th issued an ultimatum in a call on the Cabinet to "fulfil their engagement to their Sovereign". The Cabinet were prevailed on to send the fleet to Constantinople. The Sultan had given no permission, and the ships went through the straits with decks cleared for action. Their orders were if the Turkish forts opened fire, to return the fire!

Lord Carnarvon resigned on January 23, 1878. On May 28 Mr. Gladstone wrote a memorandum marked "secret", which throws a vivid light on what had been happening.

Yesterday I saw Carnarvon, whose conversation was remarkable. He said significantly that he had lost most of his faith in the words of many men. He had been talking of his (old) colleagues—and he pointed to Cross. But what I wish particularly to record are two statements given in the strictest confidence, which shows how little at present within the royal precinct liberty is safe.

1 It had happened repeatedly not only that Cabinet Ministers have been sent for to receive "wiggings" from the Queen—which as he said it is their affair and fault if they allow to impair their independence—but communications have from time to time been made to the Cabinet warning it off from certain subjects and saying she could not agree to this and would not agree to that.

2 The Prince of Wales has said to Carrington, who is his friend, that when he comes to the throne he intends to be his own foreign minister.

On the first of these I said [to Carnarvon] it recalled James II. and the Bill of Rights to which he assented. It is at any rate a position much more advanced than that of George III., who I apprehend limited himself to a case of

¹ See *ante*, p. 126.

consistency with the Coronation Oath. But that controversy was decided once for all when George IV after a terrible struggle agreed to the Roman Catholic Emancipation Bill. I said that such an outrage as this was wholly new, totally unknown in every Cabinet in which I had served, and that the correspondence must be regarded as due to Lord Beaconsfield, which he [Lord Carnarvon] entirely felt.

The statement about the Prince of Wales, if true, was probably and may well have been satirical. A gibe at the existing condition of things. It was not meant, as history showed, to be taken seriously.

Lord Beaconsfield, perhaps feeling the pressure of correspondence, begs the Queen, on March 8, to remember her gracious promise not to write at night, at least not so much. "He lives only for Her, and works only for Her, and without Her all is lost."

He expresses sorrow for the past. "There have been terrible opportunities lost, and terrible acts of weakness committed, by us during these two years. . . . A state of affairs must be substituted for that which has been destroyed and displaced." Certainly an astonishing sense and confession of weakness and failure.

The fact was that Lord Beaconsfield's policy of Turkish integrity was in the dust. It had been pulverised in argument by Mr. Gladstone; Russia was at the gates of Constantinople; "something" must now be done.

The clearest and best account of this Eastern episode is given by Lady Gwendolen Cecil in her Life of Lord Salisbury. It is difficult to disentangle the narrative in Mr. Buckle's Life of Lord Beaconsfield from the mass of correspondence with the Queen and Lady Bradford, and the detailed confusions resulting from hopeless divi-

sions in the Cabinet. Lord Salisbury has significantly left it on record that he does not wish his foreign policy to be judged by the events of the Beaconsfield administration. When he went to the Foreign Office he had to pick up as well as he could the "china broken by Lord Derby". This is not a complete statement. The Cabinet were undoubtedly responsible for Lord Derby's policy at the Foreign Office and much of his broken china. Moreover, Lord Salisbury himself had been closely associated with Lord Derby and Lord Carnarvon.

Until a new situation was brought by the complete defeat of Turkey, Lord Salisbury had been in powerful opposition to the policy of the Prime Minister.

He had thought the Crimean War an error, and that Mr. Disraeli was again ready to defend the integrity of Turkey by force. That, he was determined to prevent. In truth, almost up to Lord Derby's resignation the object for which he fought in the Cabinet was the object for which Mr. Gladstone was contending outside. "Providence", Lord Salisbury wrote to Lord Carnarvon on January 8, 1878, "has put in our hands the trust of keeping the country from entering on a wrongful war."¹ Mr. Gladstone suspected that Lord Salisbury and others were at variance with Lord Beaconsfield. The Prime Minister adhered throughout to his policy, and Mr. Gladstone was absolutely right in concentrating his attack on Lord Beaconsfield as the head and fount of a wrong and dangerous policy.

Lady Gwendolen Cecil describes Lord Salisbury's position while successfully opposing Lord Beaconsfield in the Cabinet. He was "acutely sensible" of the evils of the hesitation, insincerity, and lack of vigour of the Foreign Office. "Yet

¹ *Life of Lord Salisbury*, vol. ii. p 174.

for the remainder of that year [1877] he felt himself compelled, not only to tolerate but at times to welcome them as safeguards against another and more pressing danger. Inertness and timidity in diplomacy might and probably would produce disaster in the near future ; a war engaged upon inadequate grounds would have been disaster actually achieved."

After the resignation of Lord Derby in March 1878 the pressure of the war party became acute, actively backed as it was in the Cabinet itself by the Queen and the Prime Minister. Having strongly resisted the integrity policy, Lord Salisbury was thoroughly alarmed by the position. Constantinople was in the grip of Russia. England was isolated. "We shall be handed down in history", he despairingly exclaimed, "as the Government which through sheer incompetence plunged Europe into the greatest war of the century."¹ And again: "The Government had been like a man travelling along a mountain ridge and slipping gradually down its slope until in the spring of 1878 they had reached the verge of the precipice".²

With a masterly pen Lord Salisbury wrote the theme of the Midlothian orations.

The evidence of Lord Salisbury is an unanswerable justification of the action taken by Mr. Gladstone in 1876 and subsequently, and an equally unanswerable condemnation of the integrity policy of Lord Beaconsfield. Lord Beaconsfield was for the time saved by the acute vision and vigorous action of Lord Salisbury and by Bismarck.

In 1876 Mr. Disraeli, in pursuit of a "spirited" policy, airily said that Bismarck "must be bridled". Fortunately for Mr. Disraeli the last

¹ *Life of Lord Salisbury*, vol. II p. 211.

² *Ibid* p. 232.

thing Bismarck wanted was war. He was alarmed by the military success of Russia, and consequently the "honest broker", who declined to risk a single Pomeranian grenadier in defence of Turkey, to preserve European peace engineered the Congress of Berlin.

Everything was privately settled excepting the question of the big Bulgaria. But in the Memorandum of May 30 "the Russian Emperor undertook not to offer final opposition then to a division of the proposed Bulgaria into two provinces of which the northern alone should receive unrestricted autonomy".¹ Clearly this showed that Russia, exhausted by the war, was not prepared to resist the *force majeure* of the Powers. Lord Beaconsfield's device of the special train was for the purpose of putting pressure on Germany and Austria to exact from Russia what she was not prepared to yield at the sole instance of England. So Russia gave way to the Concert of Europe.

Lord Beaconsfield required something more to mask the destruction of Turkish integrity and independence in Europe.

The Anglo-Turkish Convention was cockered up. The acquisition of Cyprus—"the key to Western Asia"—fulfilled Lord Beaconsfield's dream. In return England undertook to safeguard the Asiatic possessions of Turkey against Russian inroads. Thus came Peace with Honour.

But Lord Salisbury, in May 1878, fired a parting shot at his chief's policy. Writing to Sir. H. Layard on May 2, he said :

The time has passed for talking about "independence and integrity". It was something of a sham in 1856—as events have proved. But it would be a pure mockery now.²

¹ *Life of Lord Salisbury*, vol. ii p 258. In this Memorandum Lord Salisbury records the understanding he had arrived at with Count Schouvaloff

² *Ibid.* p. 266

Mr. Gladstone's policy had triumphed. Eleven millions of people were freed from Turkish dominion. He summed up the result of the Treaty of Berlin :

Taking the whole of the provisions of the Treaty of Berlin together, I most thankfully and joyfully acknowledge that great results have been achieved in the diminution of human misery and towards the establishment of human happiness and prosperity in the East.¹

But this was not the work of Lord Beaconsfield. It was the result of Russian action and of Mr. Gladstone's own efforts. It is right to remember that Lord Derby and Lord Carnarvon had, like Mr. Gladstone, counterworked Lord Beaconsfield's pro-Turkish policy.

The Anglo-Turkish Convention soon dissolved in smoke. Cyprus was to be the naval base and military depot for the preservation of Asiatic Turkey. The Government took no pains to discover whether the island was really suitable for the purpose. It figured largely in the great party demonstrations which awaited the return of Lord Beaconsfield from Berlin. To these displays Lord Salisbury was much opposed. "The wire-pullers were making a great blunder", he declared in true prophecy, "and they will find it out at the polls."

Sir Garnet Wolseley was sent to Cyprus as Governor to prepare the ground. In 1879 Mr. W. H. Smith, First Lord of the Admiralty, and Colonel Stanley, the Secretary of State for War, paid an official visit of inspection. Cyprus proved to be totally unsuitable either for ships or soldiers. The ministers cut short their visit, "not however before they had confided to Wolseley that the Cabinet had been much misled by the Intelligence

¹ Morley's *Life of Gladstone*, vol. ii. p. 576.

Department as to Cyprus and its conditions, and that the island by no means answered the purpose for which it was taken over, namely, to be a place where a considerable force could rendezvous and be employed either in Asia Minor or in Egypt.”¹

Mr. Buckle endeavours to fasten some blame for failure on the Liberal Government, which withdrew three consuls appointed by Lord Beaconsfield in Asiatic Turkey. Lady Gwendolen Cecil, however, states the truth: “The withdrawal of the military consuls, two years later, only recognised a failure which had become inevitable.”

Lord Beaconsfield boldly claimed success for his policy. By consolidation he had strengthened Turkey. Yes, answered Mr. Gladstone, if by cutting off a man’s arms and legs you can call that consolidation.

The statement of the case was in those days simple enough for those who took the trouble to master the facts of a long controversy. It would be far easier now but for the passage of time, and for the general distaste for old controversies. But there is evidence which gives short cuts, and cannot be disputed. So I now turn to Lord Beaconsfield’s biographers.

It would be difficult to select three men in stronger sympathy with Lord Beaconsfield than Mr. Kebbel (*National Biography*), Mr. Greenwood (*Encyclopædia Britannica*), and lastly Mr. Buckle himself.

All three were evidently aware that if they allowed or even suggested that Mr. Gladstone was right it followed that Lord Beaconsfield was wrong. Each in his own way made desperate efforts to maintain the converse. But facts are stubborn things. The methods for evading the damning admission are various and quite amusing.

¹ *Life of Wolseley*, by Sir F. Maurice and Sir A. Arthur, p. 106.

First I take Mr. Kebbel. The *summum bonum* he finds is that "at a critical moment he [Lord Beaconsfield] saved England from war and Turkey from destruction." That was in 1878 when, before the Berlin Conference, the fleet had been despatched to the Sea of Marmora. If we were saved from war it was war our own action had made possible. Turkish domination in Europe—for that was the issue—was not saved, but on the contrary was for ever lost. What is Mr. Kebbel's own very modest estimate of the *summum bonum*? "History will not deny that he [Lord Beaconsfield] made the best [at Berlin] of a bad bargain." He regrets that this firm action was not taken earlier because history is likely to say that "his [Lord Beaconsfield's] policy halted between two stools".

Lord Beaconsfield, he declares, had carried popular opinion with him. Yet finally, "notwithstanding the enthusiasm which the foreign policy had inspired, the people were ready on slight provocation to depose him in favour of a statesman by whom it was sure to be reversed". Certainly the "enthusiasm" does not appear to have been substantial. Mr. Kebbel always speaks of "the" policy. Was it the policy of 1876, and whole-hearted defence of Turkish integrity? or of 1878, when the original policy was completely abandoned save in the reservation of Eastern Roumelia to Turkish tyranny? Where was the enthusiasm, and for what? The clever stroke at Berlin was indeed welcomed in London with acclamation. We know what Lord Salisbury thought of that. Up to that date by-elections had consistently gone against the Government.

In a veritable jungle of arguments Mr. Kebbel attempts the impossible. He tries hard to show that Lord Beaconsfield began with a great and sound policy: that he then halted between two

stools ; and finally that by sending the fleet to Constantinople and at the same time making a secret arrangement with Russia at the expense of Turkey, he refurbished the original policy and so achieved the triumph of making the best of a bad bargain.

Now let us see whether Mr. Greenwood can do better in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*. There we find only dismal apologetics. I give his conclusion in his own words :

It should be remembered that what with the known timidity of his colleagues, and what with the strength and violence of the Russian party in England, his achievement at Berlin was like the reclamation of butter out of a dog's mouth ; as Prince Bismarck understood in acknowledging Disraeli's gifts of statesmanship. It should also be remembered, when his Eastern policy in 1874-1878 is denounced as malign and a failure, that it was never carried out. Good or bad, ill or well calculated, effective existence was denied to it , and a man cannot be said to have failed in what he was never permitted to attempt.

So it appears that the popular enthusiasm instanced by Mr. Kebbel was generated by a policy which in fact never had any existence ! Has there ever been a greater failure to make good the policy of a great leader to whom both writers were heart and soul devoted ? Mr. Greenwood is more frank than Mr. Kebbel in recognising facts. But Lord Beaconsfield cannot have it both ways. He cannot claim credit for a policy which for two years his own Cabinet refused to adopt, and for a subsequent policy in direct contradiction to his first. Posterity is asked to revere a policy which never had " calculated effective existence ". It had been stabbed to death by Lord Beaconsfield's own colleagues. " Circumstances alter cases," so the Prime Minister made himself privy to the murder of

his own offspring, and appears to have induced or "magnetised" the Queen herself to believe that the child was yet alive and came of age with customary rejoicings at Berlin.

Mr. Buckle is a more skilled and wary biographer. He leaves the main burden of defence to Lord Beaconsfield himself. The Prime Minister, when he laid the Treaty protocols on the table of the House of Lords, made no allusion to his original policy and its defeat in the Cabinet. He dwelt on the advantages of the Treaty with a pride in no way lessened by the fact that they were the negation of Turkish integrity in Europe. Sixty thousand square miles had been retained for Turkey, and a population of six millions. He passed over the fact that 11,000,000 had been taken from Turkish misrule. To prevent constant intrigue to bring about a union of the two provinces a new province, Eastern Roumelia, had been taken from Bulgaria south of the Balkans. But alas! this sorry triumph was not to last six years, as we shall see later. Then there was the Anglo-Turkish Convention, founded on a dream of thirty years before, and so soon to become a mere memory.

Mr. Buckle's views are cautious, but significant. The two-stool policy had set up two sets of critics at opposite poles. High Tories complained that Lord Beaconsfield had ruthlessly partitioned Turkish territory.¹ The other side complained that the partition was not more thorough. Mr. Buckle says that this side was headed by Mr. Gladstone. Mr. Gladstone re-

¹ "A Macaronic poem of the day," says Mr. Buckle, "sadly asked :

“ Ubi sunt provinciae
Quas est laus pacasse ?
Totaes, totae, sunt partitae ;
Has tulerunt Muscovitae,
Illa Count Andrassy ”

gretted and rightly condemned the severance of Eastern Roumelia from Bulgaria. But over the Treaty as a whole he rejoiced (see p. 146). He had taken the field to prevent Lord Beaconsfield from repeating the blunders of the Crimean War, and to rescue the Balkan States from the Turk. The Berlin Treaty justified his action. Now we know from Mr. Buckle that the battle waged in public by Mr. Gladstone was hotly and successfully fought in the Cabinet.

Those who read the Queen's letters, written in strong condemnation of Mr. Gladstone, must remember that Mr. Gladstone's main primary objects were accepted by Lord Beaconsfield's own Cabinet. Can there be a more striking vindication of Mr. Gladstone's action ?

Lady Gwendolen Cecil says that when Lord Salisbury returned to the Foreign Office in 1885 and investigated the condition of British influence at Constantinople he exclaimed, "They have just thrown it away into the sea . . . without getting anything whatever in exchange". It is not clear what "it" means.

What had Lord Beaconsfield done for Turkey ? Alone she had to fight Russia ; and had lost most of her European possessions. The *place d'armes* on which rested the Asiatic guarantee before the close of 1878 was found to be worthless. What, then, was thrown into the sea ?

When Mr. Gladstone returned to office in 1880 he found that the Turks had not carried out their obligations under the Treaty of Berlin. This was not a helpful legacy. Only under the threat of force did Turkey give way. What was to be done ? Cyprus was perfectly useless. Difficulty enough followed those other legacies of the Afghan War and the Dual Control in Egypt. But the conclusive answer is given by Lord Salisbury him-

self. On November 6, 1879, in a letter to Sir H. Layard he reviewed the Asiatic position in prescient words :

The prospect is not bright. The character of the Sultan appears likely to be the doom of his race . . . If the Sultan stands out, we must be prepared for great events. Our action may not go further than demonstrations to establish that our responsibility for Turkey is at an end. But it will not be from us that the fatal blow will come. Unless everybody, English and Turkish, is in a conspiracy of illusion, the present Palace system will not be indefinitely submitted to by the Asiatic populations. But if they rebel—what next? It will be a fearful confusion involving certainly Arabia, probably Persia in the ruin. Since the collapse of the Western Empire, I doubt whether history has presented any case of such complete confusion over so large a region of country. It is worth while exhausting every source of argument and menace to avert such a catastrophe.

In these sombre words Lord Salisbury described the vast region to which England might at any moment have been called upon under the Anglo-Turkish Convention to send her troops. It was part of the policy of Peace with Honour.

Six years later Lord Salisbury yielded to the inevitable in approving the union of Bulgaria and Eastern Roumelia. So ended Lord Beaconsfield's achievement. He had backed the wrong horse. Mr. Gladstone had backed the right one, and in 1880 he once and for all freed the country from the fatal incubus of responsibility for Turkish misgovernment in Europe.

AN AFTERMATH

IN October 1927 my wife and I went to Sofia. Sentiment and personal interest alike led me to accept the invitation I had received. I leave the description of our visit to my wife, prefacing it with a few words of my own.

For what Mr. Gladstone fifty years ago had done on behalf of the liberation of Bulgaria I knew we should receive a kindly welcome. He never went to Bulgaria. It was not to be expected that the younger generations would know or think much even of a staunch political friend, a foreigner, who had died thirty years ago.

Of personal kindness and hospitality there was no end. Over and above that we were received by the nation. There was no question of "Liberal" or any other political creed.

Besides the ministers in association with the Prime Minister, we were received by M. Bouroff (Foreign Affairs), General Valcoff (War), and M. Vassileff (Public Works). Also came the leader of the Democrats, the ex-Prime Minister, M. Malinoff, M. Madjaroff, Minister Plenipotentiary at London, and M. Daneff, who, in 1913, in London represented Bulgaria at the peace negotiations with Turkey. We met also the fine old veteran, Cara-Stoianoff, whose name is a household word in Bulgaria: a deputation from Soleranie; and the chiefs of the Macedonian delegation. I had an interesting talk with an old

man who had survived the Batak massacres in 1876.

The extraordinary demonstrations of living and enthusiastic regard for Mr. Gladstone, and the vast crowds in the streets all assembled for one purpose, showed me that Mr Gladstone's action had stirred and won the heart of a nation for all time. A more moving spectacle I never saw.

Why was it? The answer is short and plain. Facing opponents and unpopularity, Mr. Gladstone had struck home for freedom and independence in the Balkans, and Bulgaria's liberation dates from 1876. My wife's account of her visit follows, by the kind permission of the editor of *Headway*, in which journal it was published.

THREE DAYS IN SOFIA

By DOROTHY GLADSTONE

It is often said that gratitude is one of the rarest of virtues, but a recent experience has convinced me that in one country at least this is not the case.

Some months ago I was invited by the League of Nations Union to be a delegate at the Council meeting of the Federation of League of Nations Societies to be held in Sofia. Whilst I was still debating whether my plans could be so arranged as to make it possible for me to go, came letters from friends in Bulgaria, urging me to come, and further begging me to persuade my husband to accompany me. They told me that a visit from the son of Mr. Gladstone would be greatly appreciated by the Bulgarian people, who held his name in great veneration. Even so we were totally unprepared for all that was to follow.

The first hint was at the frontier station (on



Photo, Rua Martin

VISCOUNTESS GLADSTONE

October 6th) where our train was boarded by M. Trifonoff, M. Antoff, the Assistant Mayor of Sofia, and various officials of the town of Sofia. The Simplon-Orient express chooses the most inconvenient hours for arriving and departing from Sofia —we were due to arrive at midnight. On the platform we were greeted by the Mayor, General Vazoff, and the Mayoress, the Town Council, and a crowd of other people who had left their firesides on a wet night to welcome us. The Mayoress gave me a lovely bouquet, the first of many I was destined to receive during the next three crowded days. Bulgarians love flowers, and our path was literally as well as figuratively strewn with flowers all the time we were at Sofia.

The next morning at 9.45 our kind friend, M. Trifonoff, came to take us to the Lycé named " Gladstone ". It is a handsome building, the largest college in Sofia. There 1000 youths between fourteen years and twenty are educated. On the threshold we were received by the Minister of Education, M. Naidenoff, and the Headmaster, M. Dencoff. Inside the large entrance hall the students, all wearing a dark blue uniform, were ranked, and the sides of the great staircase and corridors were lined with these fine young stalwart Bulgarians. There followed a short ceremony, speeches of welcome, and thanks.

In the large room where this took place were two busts, one of King Boris, the other of Mr. Gladstone, each hung with a wreath of laurels and draped with their national flag. On the walls were paintings of Bulgarians who had won liberation from the Turkish Empire for their country ; alone, above them all, presided the portrait of Mr. Gladstone. We were told that his picture hangs in every school throughout the country. He takes his place amongst their national

heroes, and every child in Bulgaria, from the age of four, is taught to know and love the name of Gladstone.

In the afternoon M. Trifonoff took us to Gladstone Street, where every house had been decorated in honour of our visit. There we were invited into Gladstone House, and, with flowers strewn before us to walk on, were taken into one of the apartment flats. Here we were kindly entertained by the smiling inhabitants, who presented my husband with a beautifully embroidered shirt and myself with attar of roses. After a light repast of rose jam—very sweet, delicate, and delicious—washed down with tumblers of water, we took our departure. I was overdue at the meeting of the Council.

When work was over, and after a hasty dinner, we were taken to the Opera by Monsieur Stephane, Archbishop of Sofia, where we enjoyed a very fine performance of *Orphée*. The next morning we repaired to the Town Hall, where, in the presence of the Prime Minister and other members of the Government, the Mayor delivered an address and presented my husband with the Freedom of Sofia. One sentence ran thus :

The memory of the great and grand Britisher, William E. Gladstone, who, in the most tragic days of the history of our nation, raised up high his powerful and authoritative voice in its defence, will live for ever in the hearts of the grateful Bulgarian people.

In replying, my husband spoke of the reasons which brought about Mr. Gladstone's intervention in 1876, adding that Bulgaria had brought him into the House of Commons in 1880.

Then came a large luncheon party, given in our honour by the Municipality of Sofia.

On Sunday morning we attended an impressive

service in the Cathedral. It is impossible to describe the majesty of the ritual or the haunting beauty of the unaccompanied singing from the invisible choir—at times rising into great bursts of ringing triumph, then sinking again to a whisper. The crowded and reverent congregation stood throughout the service, which included a sermon from the Archbishop on the League of Nations and ended with a special blessing, delivered in French, on the delegates in their work for peace.

The events of that afternoon, our last day in Sofia, were the most surprising and moving of all. For an hour and a half we stood on the balcony of our hotel, which commanded the meeting-place of four principal streets. Along a lane kept through a vast concourse of fifty or sixty thousand people there marched past what seemed to be an almost endless procession. Old and young, rich and poor, men and women, bands, banners, flags, boys' schools, girls' schools, students, judges, doctors, veterans from the war of 1877-78 in uniform, refugees from Macedonia in groups from the villages where their homes used to be. A huge crowd had assembled and stretched up the cross roads which the hotel overlooked. The press of people was terrific, yet perfect order prevailed. Only two mounted police and a few on foot kept open the lane for the procession. At last it came to an end, the crowd closed in and waited. My husband raised his hand. All at once there was complete silence, then, by a spontaneous motion, every head was bared. He spoke a few sentences, interpreted as delivered, referring to the Eastern Question and his father's fight for freedom and justice in the Balkans. This was greeted with a storm of cheers.

No sooner were we back in our drawing-room when deputation after deputation arrived, bearing gifts of beautifully illuminated addresses for him, and several complete national costumes and many flowers for myself. Men and women kissed his hands and mine, and so moving were the speeches and the whole scene that many people were weeping. The amazing thing is that all this was a demonstration, touching in its simple sincerity, to honour the memory of an Englishman who had been dead nearly thirty years, because of their gratitude for what he did for Bulgaria fifty years ago.

A huge public meeting, in support of the League of Nations, at which I was cheered to the echo before I spoke—it would have been the same had I been deaf and dumb and blind so long as my name was Gladstone—and a dinner with the Finance Minister, M. Molloff, ended our last thrilling day in Sofia.

The final touch was finding the Prime Minister on the platform at 7 A.M. the next morning to bid us farewell as we steamed away, accompanied, as far as the frontier, by one of the Ministers and the never-failing M. Trifonoff.



PART OF THE GREAT DEMONSTRATION AT SOFIA, OCTOBER 1927

CHAPTER II

THE PARLIAMENT OF 1880-1885

“Before they judged this Parliament, let them look back to the long growth and deep root of the grievances it had removed, to the powerful supports of the delinquents it had struck down, to the great necessities of the Commonwealth for which it had provided—let them look forward to the many advantages which not the present only but future ages would reap, from the laws it had passed and the work it had accomplished.”—THE GRAND REMONSTRANCE

HISTORIANS have not yet done justice to the Parliament of 1880-85. It has been treated in a spirit of political bias rather than of cool investigation. Liberal writers, owing to its deficiency in great legislative measures, and because of the Gordon episode, the divisions between Whigs and Radicals, and its undignified close, have been apologetic. Conservatives, in the desire to avenge Lord Beaconsfield, have concentrated attention on its failures and mistakes without noticing the decisions and movements which make it a landmark in history.

Of the seven Parliaments through which I have served, this one of 1880 was by far the most interesting, thrilling, and instructive. Its five years were intensely occupied. It was no period of prosaic legislative labour. Democracy, lacking as yet an effective organisation, was asserting itself persistently under the surface of things, and public interest in the affairs of the House of Commons was at its zenith. It was a drama in which the

scenes changed with startling rapidity amid developing and accumulating excitements.

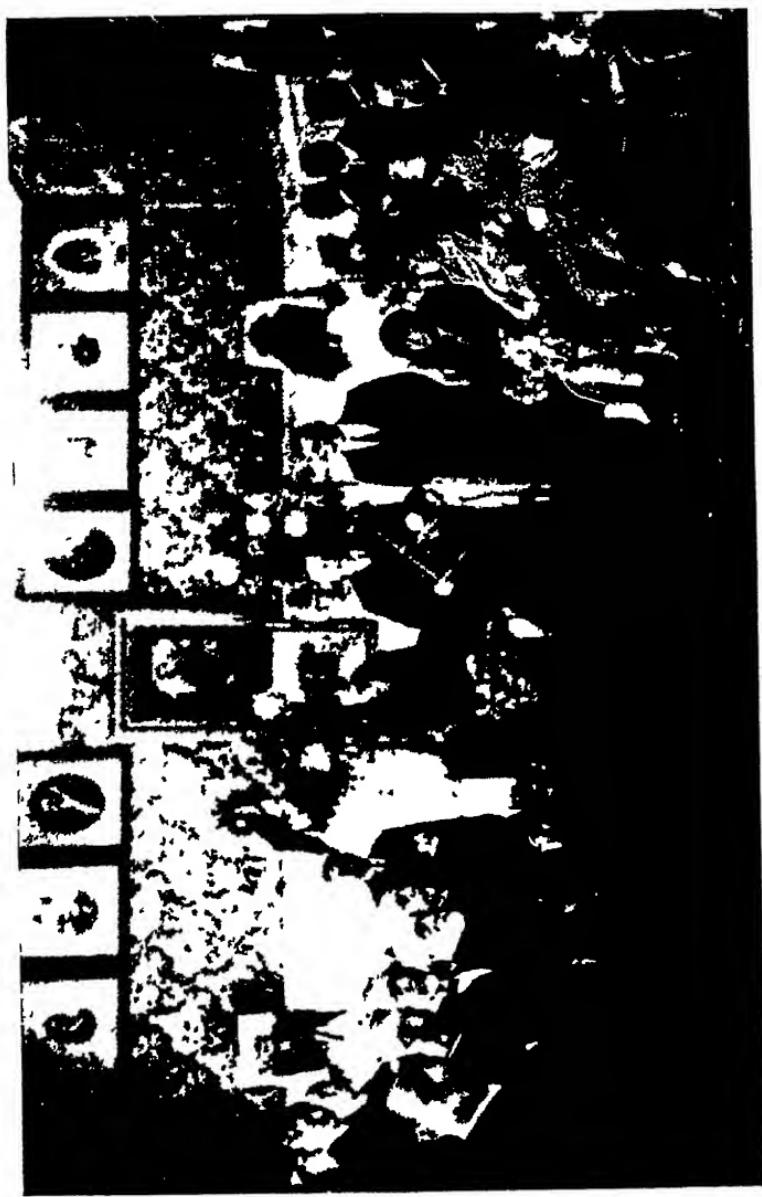
It was a period of human passion and storm. The most skilled political meteorologist from week to week could not venture on any forecast. Like the Atlantic at times, isolated disturbances were spreading or diminishing but always affecting the more heavy and consistent pressures.

The result of the General Election was a great surprise to Lord Beaconsfield. "With the exception of Gladstone and some enthusiastic Radicals nobody expected a sweeping victory for either side."¹ In this Mr. Buckle is wrong. The defeat of the Liberals in 1874 was in the main due to abstentions. The task in 1880 was to bring the full force of the party to the poll. The Chief Liberal Whip, W. P. Adam, a quiet, very competent man, was full of confidence. Election forecasts can only be made with approximate accuracy on two sets of data—the results of by-elections ; the character as well as the number of volunteers for candidature. If by-elections show definitely favourable results, and if good candidates offer to stand in sufficient numbers to fight all constituencies worth attack, a decisive victory can be anticipated. Only twice have I known these indications sufficiently marked to warrant high Liberal expectations—in 1880 and in 1906. For the 1880 election Adam had an abundance of good candidates. It was also significant that great numbers of important constituencies made their own selections without reference to headquarters.

Mr. Buckle attributes the defeat mainly to the thrust of erroneous views by Mr. Gladstone into the minds of the most ignorant voters. He forgets that the more notable gains were in the counties where "ignorant" men under the exist-

¹ *Life of Disraeli*, vol. vi p. 522.

PRESENTATION OF THE FREEDOM OF SOFIA TO VISCOUNT GLADSTONE, OCTOBER 1927



ing franchise could not vote. Moreover, he seems not to be aware that the ignorant people do not read speeches and generally do not go to meetings, that these persons, if they give their votes, are brought to the poll by enthusiastic local politicians, and that on the degree of this enthusiasm elections are won or lost. Speeches operate directly on the most intelligent men of the working and other classes who go to meetings, and not on the unintelligent.

The set of the tide had been definitely indicated since 1877. Southwark, in February 1880, was a set-back in a three-cornered fight owing to purely local dissensions. Sir E. Clarke, the winning candidate, a few weeks later was beaten by 1800.

The Liberal experts, both at headquarters and in the constituencies, were confident of success. Leeds Liberals were so confident that as early as 1878 they decided to nominate Mr. Gladstone as one of their candidates. He did not make a single speech either to ignorant or any other persons in that city, but he polled 24,622 votes, giving a majority over a strong Conservative candidate (Mr. W. L. Jackson—afterwards Lord Allerton) of 11,291. To say that Mr. Gladstone was almost the only man to expect a victory is contrary to fact and, indeed, is pure nonsense.

In truth the head of the Conservative ostrich was buried in the sands of Pall Mall. The court, society, the clubs, the city, and the press in London were overwhelmingly Beaconsfieldian. Conservative organisers certainly showed an odd ignorance of what was happening. Mr. Adam had every reason for confidence. From first to last never did the Liberals fight with greater enthusiasm and assurance.

Even in Tory London Liberal victories were

conspicuous in Marylebone, Chelsea, Lambeth, Southwark, Tower Hamlets, and elsewhere.

Mr. Gladstone once said to me that Mr. Disraeli was in the centre of three rings—his party, which he understood perfectly and governed completely; the House of Commons, of which his knowledge was good; the country, of which he was very ignorant. Mr. Buckle's book confirms that view.

Mr. Disraeli made few speeches in the country; the detail of election organisation bored him. He trusted to others for information, and had little first-hand knowledge of the movements of popular feeling. If, as he said, he never read a word of Mr. Gladstone's speeches, it follows that he never mastered the case against his own policy. He seems to have had no personal knowledge of what most people outside his entourage were thinking, and was badly advised by his officials.

When the new Parliament met it had to face the Bradlaugh question at once. The Government ought to have foreseen consequences. The situation was not well handled by the Whips' department. It was an embarrassing misfortune. The Prime Minister and all his Cabinet colleagues under an antiquated practice were seeking re-election when Mr. Bradlaugh, too ostentatiously, asked leave to affirm. Some wisdom before the event was to be expected from experienced Parliamentarians. Mr. Bradlaugh's militant personality, and the honest antipathy of multitudes of persons to his views, made trouble certain—trouble, moreover, specially perplexing to those responsible for party discipline. Religion and morals must always cut deep across the ties of party. The Liberal Whips were caught napping. Mr. Speaker Brand made his one great mistake under the pressure of technical advisers.

The Government made themselves parties to his mistake, and a duly elected member, through a series of regrettable scenes and, with one exception, of discreditable debates, was prevented from taking his seat for over five years.

In the hurry of the moment too little thought was given to all that was involved by the raising of questions which profoundly stirred human passions and prejudices. The right course would have been for the Government to have stood firmly on constitutional principle. Mr. Gladstone, accepting the Speaker's lead, left the matter to the House. Those who denounce the party system can see from what followed the evil results of leaving sections and individuals to vote without organised and responsible guidance.

When later on Mr. Gladstone introduced the Affirmation Bill, the mischief had been fully accomplished. Men had already committed themselves to wrong views, and the Bill was lost. Yet let it be remembered to the credit of this Parliament, though not to the majority which rejected the Bill, that Mr. Gladstone's great speech on the second reading finally established the true principle, and for all time shattered the effort to make religious profession the test of Parliamentary fitness.

Apart from its direct issues, the Bradlaugh question gravely interfered with the course of public business and with that close consideration which should uninterruptedly have been given to the urgent affairs requiring immediate decisions by the newly born Government. Let us see very briefly what they were

Six years of Conservative rule had added to the Statute Book measures concerning friendly societies, public health, prisons, factories, trades unions, which were sound and valuable. But

Ireland had been left untouched. The business of the House had been gravely impaired by newly developed methods of obstruction and no reform of procedure had been attempted. There had been a succession of Budget deficits.

Above all things, external affairs demanded instant attention. The Government had to make four decisions of first-rate historical importance. I have more to say about them later, and will merely state them briefly here.

1. Turkey was forced to the fulfilment of her treaty obligations to Montenegro and Greece under the Treaty of Berlin, which Lord Salisbury had not been able to secure. The Anglo-Turkish Convention was quietly consigned to its own impossibility. The policy of the integrity and independence of Turkey was definitely and finally abandoned. The wisdom of this is now not seriously challenged.

2. Cavagnari and his staff had been murdered ; the Afghan War was proceeding to further disaster at Maiwand. The Government decided to abandon the dangerous and aggressive course involved in what was wrongly called a "scientific frontier" for North-West India. This reversal of policy has for nearly sixty years stood the test of time and experience, and was a great and wise decision.

3. In South Africa the Government found the Transvaal in a state of hot disaffection. Misled by their responsible advisers on the spot, they decided to continue the policy of their predecessors. It was a momentous but unhappy choice.

4. In Egypt they accepted the Dual Control apparently without any effort to consider what it meant, and to what it was almost certain to lead. Lord Beaconsfield had entered on the purchase of the Suez shares, the Cave inquiry into Egyptian finances, and—with France—the

Dual Control. What was to be controlled? Foreign policy under the suzerainty of the Sultan? Internal order? External order? The Soudan, for which the Egyptian Government was responsible? What if France withdrew?

The Conservatives had considered none of these things, and the Liberals just stepped into their shoes. Bit by bit responsibility increased, till they found themselves in the centre of a typhoon. These legacies from the Tories were charged with death and disaster. Two of them were accepted, and from responsibility for consequences there was no escape for Mr. Gladstone and his Government.

These two last decisions, with which I deal later, were of far-reaching importance. In South Africa the Government, realising its mistake, set its course for unity with the Dutch. The retrocession of the Transvaal recognised the principle that no friendly and stable settlement in South Africa was possible without the good-will and concurrence of the Dutch.

In Egypt, like their predecessors, they had no clear vision and acted on no definite guiding principle. Their attention was concentrated on matters boiling in the House of Commons. So Mr. Gladstone at last found himself embedded in the very dangers he had feared in 1876. For good or evil, England entangled herself in Egyptian complications which forty-eight years later still persist.

These decisions, affecting Europe, Asia, North and South Africa, were of great historical importance.

I pass for a moment to home affairs. Too little attention has been given to what was hardly less than a revolution in the procedure of the House of Commons. The powers of members, individu-

ally or collectively, unduly to impede the progress of business were severely curtailed. Great authority was given to the Speaker in matters of discipline. Procedure for expediting government business, notably by the institution of "Grand Committees," was constructed. It was a vital internal reform which rescued Parliament from impotence and contempt to the untold advantage of every succeeding government.

During these five years events in Parliament and the Cabinet sounded the death-knell of eighty years' coercion in Ireland. The first act was played in the tragic and prolonged drama of Home Rule. Through the century there had been desultory and, until 1870, useless legislation on Irish land. The Act of 1881 established the new and just principle that ownership of land in Ireland was not an undivided possession but a partnership. The purchase sections led directly to other measures for the equitable transfer of Irish land from landlords to the tenants.

Lastly, the Parliament was of historic interest and importance through change and development in political parties. The Whigs, declining to advance with the times, were on the high road to extinction. The progressive sections of the Liberal party took the lead. The views of the Fabian intellectuals, of Henry George, of Karl Marx, interested and stimulated the minds of an ever-increasing number of people who took a direct interest in politics. The County Franchise Act added two million voters to the register and was the charter of the agricultural labourer. The distribution of seats which accompanied it was the masterly plan of Sir Charles Dilke. Liberalism was now equipped with the electoral strength it needed. Socialism became a political force. The Social-Democratic Federation was born.

Progressive ideas suggested the Tory democratic plans of Randolph Churchill. Irish discontent reacted on England, and drew attention to injustices in other parts of the United Kingdom.

In all this unrest and movement there became clearly visible a sense of new freedom in men's minds, and a determination to use new powers to assert their rights and improve their own conditions. Despite the blockage of Home Rule and the Boer War, this movement gathered force and asserted itself in the extraordinary election of 1906.

The great and suggestive importance of the 1880 Parliament has not yet been accurately or sufficiently appreciated by historians or even by Liberal writers. It was a time of political flood at home and abroad. Turgid streams poured from different quarters into the restricted area of Parliament. Each one brought its own complications and increased the general turmoil. The new Radicalism found itself face to face with a dilemma. It resented the menace of Parnellite methods; and yet it was attracted by the Irish ideas of Nationalism. The Whigs, disconsolate and irritable, increased perplexity by a total want of initiative. The Conservatives, out to avenge Lord Beaconsfield, sought combination with Whigs, Nationalists, and at times even with Radicals, for increasing confusion and discrediting the Government. Without studied and impartial disentanglement of movements, intrigues, and complex issues a clear judgment is impossible.

So it is open to Mr. Buckle in his biography of Lord Beaconsfield to sum up his punitive survey of events for four years after April 1881.

Some influence too in the building up of a Disraeli tradition may be ascribed to the cruel disillusionments of the

performances of the second Gladstone Government, to the associations called up by the names of Bradlaugh, Majuba, Boycott, Kilmainham, Phoenix Park, Penjeh, and Gordon¹

Presumably this is meant to be history. It deserves a parody.

Some influence too in the building up of a Gladstone tradition may be ascribed to the cruel disillusionments of the performances of the second Disraeli Government¹, to the associations called up by the names or phrases of Coffee House Babble, Shepstone, Midhat, the Slave Circular, the Dual Control, Isandhlwana, the Prince Imperial, Cyprus, the Anglo-Turkish Convention, Cavagnari, Marvin, Maiwand, and Famine or Disease

A Roland for an Oliver.

Apart from questions of historical method and accuracy, it is curious that Mr. Buckle does not see the bearing of his efforts to discredit Mr. Gladstone for the purpose of establishing a Disraeli tradition. The greater part of Mr. Disraeli's life was devoted to a wholly unsuccessful opposition to Mr. Gladstone's policy. If Mr. Gladstone's personal defects and political blunders were half as bad as Mr. Buckle so persistently holds, it is difficult to see much merit in the statesman who somehow or other could never get the better of him in the long course of thirty years. Mr. Buckle's peculiar and vindictive method stands in singular contrast to Lord Morley's wiser handling of Mr. Disraeli.

If the Conservatives were wrong in their election expectations, the Liberals were equally wrong on election results in their forecast that Liberalism had come to stay. Elated and confident, I told my constituents that twenty years of Liberal supremacy was assured. Sobriety in political

¹ Buckle's *Life of Disraeli*, vol. vi p. 631.

prophecy came after the five years which transferred that period of supremacy to the Tories.

The party had a nominal majority of 123, with Whig and Radical wings, and a strong, coherent centre. The staunch men of the centre enabled the Government to survive their unexpected troubles.

Taking the personnel of the House of Commons as a whole, in ability, personal distinction, and solidity, in oratory and capacity for work, and as representative of all classes—apart from class representation of labour—it stands, perhaps, without a rival.

The number of lawyers of present or future distinction was remarkable. On the Liberal side, apart from Harcourt, who had definitely abandoned the Bar for politics, were Henry James, Herschell, R. T. Reid, Charles Russell, J. B. Balfour, Alexander Asher, G. Walker, Horace Davy, and Arthur Cohen. Opposite sat Hardinge Giffard, Holker, Edward Clarke, Macnaghten, and Gibson. Such a galaxy of legal talent has not been seen before or since.

The Cabinet was a group of exceptionally distinguished men. Lord Acton once said that a Cabinet of the most brilliant celebrities which could be found would be an encyclopædia of error. Perhaps the Cabinet of 1880 contained too many stars of magnitude. In temperament its members were individualist, and there were too many leaders among them.

Since 1886 it is certainly true that there has been an increasing tendency for Cabinets to hold together.¹ The resignations from Mr. Balfour's

¹ "English ministers in modern times have a trick of offering to resign, and a nervous apprehension about being thought to cling to office. Even Earl Grey lowered his rare dignity by a foible for resigning. Modern historians of England take too much notice of resignations inchoate, complete or retracted" (William Cory's *Guide to Modern English History*, p. 185).

Cabinet of Chamberlain, the Duke of Devonshire, and others was not so much due to individual differences of opinion as to a break up on the Free Trade question. Since then resignations have been conspicuous by their absence. Threatened and actual resignations were a trouble to Lord Beaconsfield. They were a continual worry to Mr. Gladstone in the government which followed. To the Duke of Argyll the rights of landlords amounted to an inexorable dogma. Bright and Forster were Quakers, one opposed to war in all shapes and forms, both being men of strong independent character. Chamberlain and Hartington were leaders of sections and worked as such. Harcourt's threats to resign were part of his remarkable but somewhat hasty personality. It happened that many of the men in Mr. Gladstone's Cabinet had great possessions, and moors and forests offered formidable counter-attractions to politics.

The marked increase of party organisation, of collectivism, and of definite party programmes have undoubtedly tightened the sense of party loyalty for common purposes and have diminished occasions of possible differences.

There has also been a change in the personnel of Cabinets. Men are more definitely political, fewer of them are men of wealth, and the personal inclination to stay is greater than the inclination to go.

Mr. Gladstone's Cabinet would have perhaps been more efficient, certainly more alert, had it contained two or three less brilliant men better trained in the business side of politics, watching the general action of the Cabinet and not paying too much attention to their personal position, men of cool judgment who could see the ground better than cleverer men with their heads in the air. Men of

this kind might have seen the mishandling which led to Majuba ; the blunder in the selection of Gordon ; the manœuvres of Randolph Churchill ; and they would have prevented the catastrophic manifesto of Parnell. Such men—"utility men"—have been taken much more freely into subsequent Cabinets, and with good results.

The composition of the Government was according to precedent, but it was not suited to the movements and changes of the day. It was strong in administrative capacity, but even here it had certainly one weak point. Lord Kimberley, the Colonial Secretary, had had no training in the House of Commons, and though of great ability, had certain deficiencies with which I deal later. His under-secretary, Sir Mountstuart Grant Duff, was a man of learning and culture, but singularly unqualified for laborious and effective work either in his department or in the House of Commons. He had neither the confidence nor the ear of the House of Commons, on which he acted as a rasping file. A small man, turning his head back and his beard forward, his pride was to speak with the fewest words. Sitting by the Speaker, when questions were put to him he emerged suddenly, shot out his answer, and vanished. A classical answer was founded on his practice. Certainly I first heard it attributed to him. "The hon. member's question resolves itself into three parts. To the first, my answer is No ; to the second, Yes ; to the third, God only knows."

As will be seen later, it was the inadequacy of the Colonial Office which brought the first great trouble on the Government.

There were many interesting and notable figures in this House. In the corner seat below the Treasury Bench sat Henry Labouchere, who, for over twenty years, took more part in debates

than any other private member. Though unsparing of everybody in his smoking-room jests, he held Mr. Gladstone, as I know, in high regard. Loyal to Liberalism, he was friendly to the Government. He was the licensed libertine of the House because of his impish, spicy humour and unflinching audacity. On one occasion Henry Chaplin was making a heavy father speech to show that the leading thinkers and writers of Europe were opposed to Home Rule. "Then", he said, "there is M. Molinari." Labouchere rose at once and said (I quote from memory) with great gravity, "Mr. Speaker, this is a matter of great importance and it is essential that the House should get the names correctly. Am I right in thinking that the Rt. Hon. gentleman said Mr. Apollinaris?" The interruption was disastrous to the speech. Recklessly inaccurate, Labouchere was extremely clever, with a shrewd eye for weak points, and had to be reckoned with. In the rivalries of Radicals and Whigs he took a leading part. Under a cynicism, largely assumed, he was a genial, kind-hearted man of real sincerity of purpose and never bore malice because his keen desire for office could not be met.

Goschen, a most formidable and inveterate critic of the Government, occupied another corner seat. Behind the Treasury Bench sat Samuel Whitbread. He was the leader of the Liberal centre. Refusing Cabinet office, the Speaker-ship, and a peerage, he was one of the most conspicuous and respected figures in the House. Magnificent in physique—for he stood about six feet four inches—in deliberate sentences he summed up positions with a clearness and weight that in stormy times did much to keep the party together.

Then there was the personality of Fawcett.



SAMUEL WHITBREAD, M P

From a Drawing by George Richmond in the possession of Mr S H Whitbread at Southill

A fine speaker, his tall figure, his blindness, his fame as an economist, always secured the special attention of the House. Courtney was a personality and would have had a strong position had he been less stiff-backed and dogmatic. Bradlaugh, powerful in debate, made his fame as a champion of the Constitution. There was the stirring oratory of Joseph Cowen, who might have won a great position had he been less terribly self-centred.

But to the crowds who throughout the Parliament sought entrance to the public galleries, the chief interest lay in its oldest members, who linked up the present with famous days of the past. *Facile princeps*, of course, came Mr. Gladstone, who had been elected in 1832, and next to him John Bright (1843). There were the two other picturesque but less famous figures of Charles Villiers (1885) and John Manners (1841).

Putting aside Mr. Gladstone and Mr. Bright and—for different reasons—Mr. Parnell, Hartington stands out as the most powerful personality in the history of this Parliament. Remarkable and effective as he was, Chamberlain had not yet reached maturity. Randolph Churchill was a meteor; Arthur Balfour was at the outset of his distinguished career; but Hartington was at his full strength. A certain aloofness, dignified and reserved; his independence, and his almost entire freedom from the motives and ambitions which possess ordinary politicians, gave him a position peculiarly his own. Every man held him in respect heightened by his social distinction. When he chose to take the trouble he could make speeches of almost the highest level.

It is often said that votes are not won or lost by speeches in the House of Commons. This is

the reverse of truth. There are party issues worn so threadbare by years of consideration and debate that in final decision the opinion of practically every man is a settled matter. Such occasions are comparatively few. New and unexpected questions constantly arise on the Speech from the Throne, on the motion that the Speaker leave the Chair, on private members' motions, on the estimates themselves, and in Committees on Bills. Speeches influence votes on countless occasions and often on important subjects.

On one occasion the case of an old civil servant of the Indian Government, in or about 1888, aroused keen interest. He appeared to have been most harshly treated. I told Mr. Gladstone about it. He thought injustice had been done to "an old curmudgeon like himself", and promised to hear the debate. The House was full and loudly cheered the opening speeches. Gorst, as Under-Secretary for India, represented the Government. The whole House was against the Government. Then Gorst rose and mercilessly taunted the House for its sentimental weakness and ignorance. Having infuriated everyone, he replied deliberately and conclusively to every point that had been made. The House began to melt away. Mr. Gladstone said, "It's no use my staying". I don't remember that a division was even challenged. Over and over again I have listened to speeches which have had a conclusive effect in the division lobbies. It is perhaps the exception when they do not.

On great occasions Hartington could speak with a force given to few. Usually he sat silent, almost somnolent, imperturbable. Once Tim Healy was flashing out a bitter attack. Hartington was on the front Opposition Bench with his hat over his eyes, apparently asleep.

Healy turned on him suddenly : " There is the noble Marquis. Like a pike at the bottom of a pool." Hartington's hat never stirred, but I saw his whole body shake with laughter. When moved by a great subject and the sense of his own responsibility, no man that I have known in the House of Commons, apart from Mr. Gladstone, and in later days Asquith, could speak with such telling power. His views were never distributed to the lobby and the press. His great honesty, reticence, cool impassive judgment, his stately figure and solid ability fascinated an audience usually intolerant of slow and somewhat ponderous speech. His failure to form any progressive or even helpful views on the Irish troubles, which eventually submerged the Whig party, was to many of us who had to part company with him, little less than a tragedy.

Literature in this Parliament was represented by Bryce, Elton, Justin McCarthy, Thorold Rogers, Fawcett, John Morley (1883), and Sir George Trevelyan ; science by Lubbock, Professor Story Maskelyne, Professor James Stuart, and Sir Lyon Playfair ; the Press by John Walter, Dwyer Gray, William O'Brien, T. P. O'Connor, and J. Cowen ; railways by four chairmen, Sir D. Gooch (G.W.R.), Lord R. Grosvenor (L.&N.W.R.), Sir E. Watkin (S.E. and Manchester-Sheffield and Lincolnshire Railways), and S. Laing (Brighton Railway) ; shipowners by Donald Currie, Thomas Sutherland, Harland, and Charles Wilson ; finance by Lord Rothschild, J. G. Hubbard, and Thomas Baring ; the classics by T. Fremantle, Sir T. Acland, Charles Rendell, Charles Parker, Osborne Morgan, Craig Sellar, and Wodehouse ; brewers by Bass, Allsopp, and Whitbread ; great landowners like Westminster, Sutherland, Bedford, Portman, Pembroke, Fitzwilliam, had family

representatives. There were great leaders of industry, not mere company magnates, but men who had wholly or largely created the organisations which they controlled. Such were George Palmer, Isaac Holden, John Barran, George Elliott, Charles Tennant, Samuel Morley, and others too numerous to mention.

The majority of the Liberals was 123. It would be truer to say that it was a majority against the late Government—a very different affair. There were some forty Parnellites or independent members who, for practical purposes, had to be reckoned as opponents. Labour was represented by two excellent men, Henry Broadhurst and that perfect gentleman Thomas Burt.

The actual number on which the Government could rely consisted of Liberals 347, plus Liberal Home Rulers 26, which gave a working majority of 76.

It has sometimes been said that this election was the triumph of Radicalism. In those days a Radical was looked upon as a fearsome person, a menace to property, social order, and the Constitution itself. The more extreme men in the country were so few in number that they did not count. A Radical, in fact, was simply an advanced Liberal, "a Liberal in earnest", as Mr. Gladstone once described him. The election was the triumph of Liberalism, and all the leading Radicals were elected.

As Whigs and Radicals fought, if not to a finish in this Parliament yet to an advanced stage on the way to it, a general survey of their relative strength is interesting. It is not possible now to distinguish by any labels those who might be called members of these sections. My memory of individual men is fresher in respect to this Parliament than it is even for the Parliament of 1906.

This is no doubt due to the keenness of youth, the predominance of Mr Gladstone's personality, and the vividness of an exceptional number of exciting issues. Dod supplies the designations of individual members, and these I have studied. But the mass of our men called themselves Liberals. About a score are entered as "advanced" or "decided" Liberals. Only about a dozen dubbed themselves "Radicals". But these included Chamberlain, Dilke, Bradlaugh, Wilfrid Lawson, Stansfeld, T. B. Potter, and Burt. Men of note, but a handful.

Lord Morley and other writers speak of the Radicals as a strong restive force embarrassing, at any rate in early days, to the Government. There were several men besides "advanced Liberals" who could be fairly classed as Radicals though calling themselves "Liberals". In the independent days before office I belonged to the left wing of the party and remember pretty clearly who the more advanced men were. They seem a remarkably mild lot now. But the total number—who might be called Chamberlainites—did not exceed seventy. As might be expected, Liberal candidates, recognising that Mr. Gladstone was the leading figure in the election, clustered under his umbrella. Apart from the Whigs, democratic influences had definitely enlarged and strengthened the outlook and views of the average Liberal. Developed Liberalism rather than Radicalism characterised the Parliament, because of the preponderating influence of Mr. Gladstone.

It is perhaps less difficult to distinguish the men who may be said to have been Whigs. No one stood for Parliament as a Whig in 1880. That would never have done. Every Whig stood ostensibly as a Liberal. But Whig traditions, the weight and authority of great territorial

possessions, and the distinguished personalities of leaders were still a power behind the throne. So we saw in this House of Commons representatives of famous Whig houses, Cavendish, Russell, Grosvenor, Leveson-Gower, Foljambe, Portman, Campbell, Howard, Lambton, Spencer, Villiers, Whitbread, Fortescue, Elliott, Grey, and others. They were "moderates", and—with one or two notable exceptions—constantly in conflict with the Liberal left. Judging the men by their Parliamentary action, the moderate or Whig section totalled approximately sixty-five. Practically the advanced and the moderate sections, the Radicals and Whigs of the party, in mere numbers, balanced each other.

Neither section was organised as it would be organised now. The party was united under one Chief Whip. Neither section had even acting leaders. But orders for action or inaction were taken at times directly or indirectly from Chamberlain and Hartington.

The Bradlaugh question gave birth to the Fourth Party. Winston Churchill describes it in his Life of Lord Randolph, but on one point I differ from him. He definitely says that Arthur Balfour was one of the four. I was a close observer of the Fourth Party. Undeniably Balfour co-operated and often sat with Churchill, Wolff, and Gorst. But not constantly. Nephew of Lord Salisbury and quite recently his private secretary, he could not join fully in the game. When the attack was on the Government he joined *con amore*. But Churchill was openly on the move against his leaders. Northcote was "the goat"; W. H. Smith and Cross were "Marshall and Snelgrove". He frequently acted in open defiance of his Front Bench. On such occasions Balfour was not to be seen in his immediate

neighbourhood. His uncle was leader of the party, and bound by ties of association and courtesy to his colleagues in the House of Commons. To this Balfour, as would be expected, always had regard. The regular Fourth Party consisted of three. Balfour was an invaluable ally, but he did not belong to it. Not long ago I put the question to Henry Lucy, than whom there could be no better authority. He absolutely agreed with me.

Finally there was Parnell and his party, numbering about thirty-two—subsequently increased by a few recruits from Mr. Shaw's following of Liberal Home Rulers, numbering twenty-six.

Parnell stands unique in history. He was a born leader of men on a single enterprise. Outside politics in no direction did he reach distinction. Intellectually he did not initiate anything. James Lowther towards the close of the 1868 administration, and Biggar during Lord Beaconsfield's Government, as originators of Parliamentary obstruction have stronger claims than Parnell. He established an iron ascendancy in the Irish party largely because he possessed all the qualities in which Irishmen are deficient. In public he was self-contained, autocratic, intolerant of advice, allowing no interference. Attention and interest were concentrated on him because he was the sole and absolute directing authority in the Irish party. His loyalty to Ireland was unquestionable; yet when, in the disastrous close of his career, his own position was challenged, personal considerations overbore everything else. Himself of English blood, it always appeared to me that hatred of the English for their actions in Ireland was a more potent motive force with him than love for Ireland and the Irish.

He directed obstruction, though personally

quite incapable of obstructing. In the art of it his followers were supreme. Sexton, Healy, and one or two others knew the rules of the House as thoroughly as the clerks at the table. It is a mistake to think that it was only a matter of wasting time. Irish Nationalists knew well the danger of excess, which would justify the Government in suppressing it. With all their hostility to the British Raj in Dublin, they wished to gain the sympathy of the British democracy. It was a difficult game to play, and only those who watched their methods from the floor of the House or the Press Gallery can realise the skill which they developed. They knew that up to a point the Conservatives welcomed what was inconvenient to the Government and adverse to legislation they disliked. Here they were on safe ground. They were past masters in backing effective Conservative points by interminable speeches. Here they had the moral support of the Opposition. They kept a shrewd finger on the Tory pulse. When the barometer was set to foul weather in Irish business and we had to anticipate long, dreary hours of attendance, suddenly the Nationalists would be gracious and conciliatory. We were released, and went off thinking them not such bad fellows after all. Quick wits, imagination, hard labour in working up matters to talk about, brought a mastery of the art which could in no like circumstance have been acquired by the English or Scotch. Through it all was an inexhaustible fund of Irish humour which softened animosities and was often irresistible. The removal of "the boys" has certainly not been an unqualified gain.

This small party included eight men besides Parnell who were exceptionally good debaters. Sexton, Healy, Dwyer Gray (editor of the *Freeman's Journal*), T. P. O'Connor, John Dillon,

A. M. Sullivan, and O'Connor Power. Healy¹ always held the House by his biting and in those days savage humour, his incisiveness, quickness, and mastery of detail. T. P. O'Connor was then almost as popular as he is now. Sexton's speeches, however long, were perfectly phrased and admirably reasoned. At one all-night sitting he spoke after 2 A.M. for three hours. The House and galleries were almost deserted. I was asleep in one of the lobbies. Next day I met Herschell, who was in a state of enthusiasm about Sexton's speech. Herschell was an extraordinary man. As Solicitor-General he was one of the most hard worked in the Government. He had his own practice. He was constantly in attendance at debates and never slumbered or slept. He had listened to the whole of this speech, which he said was an intellectual masterpiece. Yet the speaker had an audience of about a dozen men, and the speech was not reported in any newspaper. Sexton was a journalist, a curious solitary man. When Home Rule brought friendly relations between Liberals and Home Rulers, he was the only man in his party who had sworn never to put his legs under an English dinner-table, and declined every invitation. Intellectually, I believe, he was above all his colleagues, excepting perhaps Healy.

In 1883 William O'Brien, at times a most striking speaker, a man of great influence in south Ireland, was elected for Mallow. Early in 1882 Dwyer Gray came to me with a request. William O'Brien was in prison as a "suspect". He had had grave family bereavements. His own health was then in fact so bad that it was doubtful whether he could live long. Dwyer Gray could not go to Forster himself and begged me to do

¹ Governor-General of Ireland, 1921-28.

what I could. I went to Forster and told him what I had heard. He said he was glad to have a reason for liberating O'Brien, and the release followed without delay. William O'Brien died this year (1928) in his seventy-seventh year.

Apart from Mr. Gladstone and Mr. Bright there were at least five men in the House who were natural orators. David Plunket (afterwards Lord Rathmore), with his wit and humour, helped by a slight stammer, always delightful to see and hear ; Joseph Cowen, aggressive and forceful ; Sexton, who marred a great gift by the lengthiness acquired in obstruction ; A. M. Sullivan and P. J. Smyth, Irish orators of grace and brilliance. Randolph Churchill and Goschen were powerful speakers, and soon John Morley and Courtney added to the number of men who had to be reckoned with. As regards the Government itself, as Morley says, " no more capable set of ruling men were ever got together."

I pass on to legislation and obstruction.

When the Hares and Rabbits Bill was selected for the first legislative subject we received it with a sense of anti-climax. Had we met for this ? It really was a badly needed measure. I remembered shooting quite recently on a Lancashire estate when out of one comparatively small covert we killed two or three hundred hares.

The Bill was all right, but not up to our expectations. Not like the Irish Church in 1868. Nor, as the opening measure of the first session, was it comparable to the Government of Ireland Bill in 1892 and Workmen's Compensation in 1906.

The circumstances were different in 1880. In 1868 Mr. Gladstone had a great scheme of legislative work. He had no such scheme in 1880, thinking his call was limited to the responsibilities

he had incurred in attacking and defeating the external policy of Lord Beaconsfield. The newly enfranchised voters were not yet vocal and had hardly considered what they themselves wanted. The county franchise was, in fact, the only great home question. The National Liberal Federation was in its infancy and had not formulated any policy. The Liberal Central Association had practically only been concerned with registration and the fixing of candidates. County franchise had to stand over till Parliament was approaching its allotted time. The Employers' Liability Bill was not ready. So we had to be content with Hares and Rabbits.

Even if the Government had been prepared for big legislative work things would not have been very different. Ireland blocked the way. Precedence would have had to be given for Bills dealing with evictions, land, arrears of rent, public order, and the new regulations for public business. Dramatic events crowded into the five years, and there were lengthy debates on most of them. A summary of them is necessary as a reminder of what the Government had to face.

The Bradlaugh episodes began at once and persisted for four years. Then came the disastrous defeat of Maiwand ; Roberts's march to Candahar ; the fleet demonstration at Dulcigno ; the Transvaal rising, followed by Laing's Nek, the Ingogo, and Majuba ; the famous sitting of forty-one and a half hours with its historic ending ; the ejection of thirty-seven Parnellite members ; the adoption of the closure ; the assassination of the Czar ; the death of Lord Beaconsfield ; the retrocession of the Transvaal ; the arrest of Parnell ; the "Kilmainham Treaty" ; the Phoenix Park tragedy ; the bombardment of Alexandria ; the resignations of Forster and

Bright ; the battle of Tel-el-Kebir ; the fighting on the Red Sea littoral ; the Nile expedition ; the battle of Abu Klea ; the fall of Khartoum ; the Penjdeh crisis with Russia ; the crisis with the House of Lords on the Franchise Bill. All these weighty events intensified feeling in and out of Parliament, and gave rise to lengthened and excited debate. In the House of Commons itself every effort was being made to exhaust ministers, and Mr. Gladstone in particular, physically and mentally by embittered and prolonged attack.

The story of obstruction has passed into history. Politicians of the present day can hardly realise the chaos which obstruction brought about. The Parnellites made use not only of Irish questions but of every question. Every man spoke on any subject as long as his physical endurance permitted. The party was organised in relays. They brought in Conservatives by raising Conservative issues, and many Conservatives gladly joined in the fun. By moving amendments to main questions they got fresh rights to speak. They came into the House loaded with blue-books from which they made interminable quotations.

The Speaker had no power to stop them. All the Government could do was to keep a quorum and tire them out by protracted sittings. The House of Commons on these numberless occasions was alternately a bear-garden and a chamber with a few weary people hearing but not listening to one man after another.

Members in these days had to read their questions to the House though they were printed in the Order paper. The Irishmen wrote immensely long questions and read them slowly to the House. If a member was not satisfied with the answer he could make a speech and end with a motion. There was the famous case (June 14,

1880) when Mr. F. H. O'Donnell made an outrageous attack on M. Challemel-Lacour, the newly appointed French Ambassador, accusing him of robbery and murder. Mr. Gladstone, after consulting the Speaker, moved that O'Donnell be no longer heard. It was the only remedy ; none other was suggested. When challenged the Speaker said there was no precedent for Mr. Gladstone's motion for two hundred years (immense Conservative cheering), no occasion had arisen (deafening Government counter - cheers). Northcote committed an incredible blunder in supporting the Parnellites against the motion, and a bitter, violent controversy lasted till 1 A.M., when business was resumed and the Speaker called Question 24 !

During the first two years what we hoped would be the Government express lumbered along like a blocked, half-empty goods train. It is difficult now for anyone not at the time in the House of Commons to realise what went on day after day. I venture therefore to quote my diary from the opening of the session on January 6, 1881, to show under what conditions Mr. Gladstone had to work. I was of course a youthful partisan, but the facts are accurate.

1881. The New Year opens upon innumerable political difficulties, the legacies of an incompetent and ambitious Tory Government. An expiring war in India, two wars at the Cape with more threatening, the inflammable Greek question and the complex repellent Irish business.

Jan. 6 The P.M.'s speech excellent—perhaps he said too little on the Land Bill thus creating needless disappointment among the Radicals. But most diplomatic. Forster merely better than I expected Northcote as usual.

Jan. 7. Parnell's annoying but hollow speech—Gibson's fiery and effective onslaught. Henry James brought in his Corrupt Practices Bill—excellent measure.

Jan. 10 [Monday] Debate on the Address continued.

Shaw good. Russell able but clearly "retained". Randolph impudent and independent of Front Bench Rogers very amusing Plunket in many ways admirable

Jan. 11. Debate drags on—missed Hartington's able speech

Jan. 12. 3 hours of sheer obstruction Talked with Mr Gray, ex Lord Mayor of Dublin, but could not get him to meet the question "Is the Government to allow the Land League to usurp authority?" In the evening with Mary [Gladstone], Alfred [Lyttelton], and Lord Acton to "The Cup" and "Corsican Brothers", after dining with Lord A at St James Hotel. Lord A said the most interesting party he had ever known at a country house was at Clifden in '64. W E. Gs, D. of Argyll, Panizzi [H N G and H J. G. from Eton] The Irish Church was here declared to be doomed and its disestablishment discussed in considerable detail.

Father laid up with cold, but received Irish deputation on land and Midlothian electors on Deceased Wife's Sister Weather savage, snow and sharp frost

Jan. 13. Frost continues Father in bed as a matter of precaution. Debate on address con. 2½ hours' speech from Dr. Cummins [a Parnellite]. Dined with Wests . . . back to House in time to hear glorious speech from Pat. O'Brien¹ Adjourned From various rumours fear that in matter of Cabinet secrets Chamberlain is leaky.

Jan. 14. Cold very great. Father better but stays in bed all day 7th night of debate Really good speeches

¹ Sir Patrick O'Brien, Bart, had sat continuously for King's County since 1852. A typical Irishman, a great gentleman, whilome Repealer, an orator, he was intensely hostile to the Parnellites. He had his weaknesses, and generally spoke after dinner, and always in a full House. Mr Lucy tells the inimitable story of how he challenged William O'Brien to fight, and secured the O'Gorman Mahon as his second

In debate any interruption or movement of the Nationalists secured his immediate attention, whatever he was speaking about He flashed out that T. P. O'Connor was the modern Plutaich at £10 a week. He riveted attention on Sexton by a sudden allusion to his Hyperion locks. W. Redmond offended him "I am not going to play the part of a lion, but if I did, my jackal would be the hon member"

"Sir Patrick O'Brien", says Sir H Lucy, "flings away his prepared oration, text and all, and delights the listening Senate with an impromptu speech which of itself, from the variety of its topics, might have been subdivided into twenty for the use of ordinary men" He was of a type that has long since passed.

from Sexton and Gray. The latter commenting on reports of Irish outrages said 2/3rds of them were exaggerated and $\frac{1}{2}$ of them had no foundation in fact. An insufficient speech from Childers followed by a violent and brutal harangue from O'Donnell. Division for Parnell's amendment 57, including 8 English Radicals. Against 434. Adjourned 1 50 A M

Jan 15 Sat Crowds of people on the ice in St James Park . . W E G pondering over the obstruction question. He was much interested when I told him what E. D. Gray, M P, had said to me—that the suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act 3 months ago would have quashed the Land League.

Jan 16 Frost continues severe. . . Father in excellent spirits.

Jan 17. Justin McCarthy's amendment. Scathing rebuke by the P.M. of the Land League for spinning out the debate. Irishmen, *i.e.* Parnellites, extremely irritated. Cannot help feeling it was rather too sudden, rather too strong a rebuke. But he had the feeling of the House with him. . . O'Shea told me that he and Nolan had parted company with Parnell—also that time was all important to the League as the organisation was not perfected to defy coercion. Davitt, he told me, was the ruling spirit and the whole strength of the Fenians was enlisted in the Land movement. Parnell he declared to be a puppet in their hands but thoroughly honest and not touching a penny of the L.L. money. Dillon's speech bloodthirsty and out of order. He means mischief. Parnell spoke in a state of violent but suppressed agitation—he could hardly hold his papers. Speech rather striking but too savage.

Jan. 18 Blinding snow storm all through the day exceeding everything of the kind in the memory of living men. Gale tremendous and traffic in the streets almost entirely stopped. Causton¹ told me he had to pay £1 to a cab-driver to bring him from Kensington to the House. Walking very difficult owing to the wind and drifts of snow. Dined with F. Leveson meeting Wests and Lady Hayter. Our intention of going to the play was frustrated. Long and dreary debate on McCarthy's amendment—no striking speeches. Division 201 to 37—adjourned 12 40. Father in good health again. Gray told me he thought Parnell

¹ Lord Southwark.

deluded in believing he could work Home Rule through the land; because he considers that the agitation would entirely die away if fixity of tenure was granted *Seems* an honest man. Perhaps he is

Jan. 19. Frost con, wind moderating. Traffic partially resumed, most cabs and hansom with 2, busses with 4 horses. Many tandems. Dawson's amend^t [Parnellite] Labouchere told me that Biggar asked him if he could do anything for Sexton, who he said "was not half such a blackguard as some of us". Feeling of the country is being roused rapidly Wigan election badly lost because the Liberal candidate went with the extreme Home Rule party Playfair told me he was coming from the House with Moore, M.P (Irish), when a big navvy came up half drunk and said, "You are 2 damned Irishmen who have been obstructing the business of the nation and I'll roll your heads in the snow" They had to call a policeman to their aid

Jan. 20. First, two divisions and then temporary collapse of Irish obstruction. It is thought by W E G that Parnell may have got wind of the intention of the Government to-night to bring in proposals for dealing with Irish obstruction, had the Irish persevered in talking As it is, by being humble they put the Gov^t in a hole and pose before the country as moderates. Moreover the Gov^t having promised not to bring in their Protection measure till Monday have no business for to-morrow and supply must come on . . .

Jan. 21. Frost con, efforts at last being made to take some of the snow away. Rylands on the Transvaal. Very satisfactory statement from the P M, but Lawson and the Irish insisted on a division—Rylands walking out. Minority only mustered 33 Rose at 10 30'

Monday, 24. Frost renewed Forster brought in his Coercion Bills in a speech unusually strong Very good except in some details which were too personal. Rather a fine declamatory speech from Bradlaugh, a venomous and brutal one from O'Donnell. Adjourned 12.50. Walked afterwards with Arthur Arnold.

Jan. 25. Frosty. . . . P.M 's motion for giving precedence to the Protection Measures. Dined with the Grahams. . . . Back to the House to find Biggar suspended. Consequence of this Irish obstruction. Gov^t determined on fighting it Dublin trials decided

Jan. 26 Sat through the debate—3 divisions—till

9 A.M. Then went home, changed, washed, and ate. Back for final retreat of Irishmen House rose at 2 P.M. . .

[After a sitting of 22 hours]

Rosebery to luncheon . . . Rain falling turns to ice.

Jan. 27 Complete thaw with rain Debate on 1st R. of Protection Bills con Talk with Willis [K C member for Peckham] What a queer shrewd right minded person he is He approves of the House of Lords because a second chamber on the brink of being extinguished is the best for the country A very suggestive remark . . . Very fine speech from Bright—calm, forcible, happy in illustration, strongly condemnatory of the effects of the L L—and altogether in his best style. It touched the Irish to the quick . . .

Jan 28 We are absorbed in Ireland and the snow passes away unnoticed. W. E. G . . . Rising about 11 he made one of his very finest speeches I sat among the Irishmen and could see the effect it had on them Perfect in arrangement, faultless in argument, lofty in tone, the speech was absolutely entralling I did not see one man leave the crowded House for an hour and a half Some half dozen Irishmen . . . behaved rudely with the interruptions. On the whole however considering the crushing force of fact and inference they took it with patience, some with serious gravity Edward Clarke¹ came up to me (I do not know him personally) and said, brimming over with enthusiasm, that it was the finest speech he had ever heard from him ; it surpassed the Banner speech on Reform ; and that he was forced to go to him and shake hands. . . .

Sunday, Jan 30 Father in good spirits . . . He has in his own mind quite determined to give up the Chancellorship, and he certainly feels the work He was talking about Lord Coleridge in reference to Homer when he said, “ I was talking to Homer ” quite innocently He stopped and said, “ Ah, if I could talk to the old chap how soon would I give up all this business ”. He spoke in the most pathetic manner. It is indeed plain that if he had his own free will he would retire from politics But he now recognises the necessity of his position as for four years before the Gen El he contemplated the possibility of being recalled to the helm I think it was in '77 when I was walking with him at Hawarden and asked him direct if he thought he would

¹ The distinguished Conservative lawyer.

have to go back to office. He answered then, "It does not depend upon me but on the people" I believe that up to the time he was sent for he foresaw what must happen. But after the election he did not face it and remained quiescent, being quite confident that Granville and Hartington would do the right thing. But all through he only looked upon a renewal of office life as a temporary affair—as an act of duty to the country ; contemplating retirement as soon as the primary evil results of Tory misrule were removed. And this he holds to

Monday, Jan. 31 (1881) Commencement of the Long Sitting on adjourned debate. Home Rulers refusing division, arrangements made for continuous sitting. Protracted obstruction Division 7 A M (Feb 1) Left House at 9 30 for breakfast, returning at 11 in the morning.

Tuesday, Feb 1 Division at 3 Obstruction continued. Cabinet at 4 to consider question, and things approaching to a crisis. Div. 7 30 With Barran to dine at the Reform with Kitson and the representatives of the Leeds Chamber of Commerce. Back to the House for an extraordinary scene. To begin with, —¹ was behaving so oddly that I went to Sir Henry Holland to ask if he was ill. Holland told me he had been dining in the City with the "worthy alderman", and tell it not in Gath, had had too much. The whole House was in fits of laughter at the continued and uproarious interruptions of the most sedate and respectable member of the House. He cheered the Parnellites, barked like a dog, and pushed away well meaning friends like Beresford Hope who came to see if they could induce him to go. Meanwhile the House was getting more and more excited over the Irish obstruction, and this was intensified by the most injudicious conduct of Cross and Northcote. The P.M and Hartington were absent. An appeal of Cross to the Speaker, and the Speaker's answer brought out a storm of indignation against the obstructives which swept away the last remnants of order and decorum. Playfair succeeded to the Chair about 1 P M. and was very weak. Chlders on an appeal from Northcote, virtually supported Cross in his appeal to the Chair to take immediate and decisive measures. Thus Playfair ² was put in a most

¹ He was in fact an exemplary and much respected man.

² He knew that the Speaker was to take action the following morning and so merely had to keep his end up as well as he could

awkward position, he did not adopt the suggestion, and only repeated the Speaker's warning. Thereupon Smith and Northcote left the House followed by many Tories and some Liberals I was all for fetching the P M. and appealed to Childers and Freddy Cavendish who were against it I knew the Gov^t were not ready to take action till 9 a m. on Wed morning and now their hand was forced The Tories were furious, our men ready to revolt, and 7 hours intervening before anything could be done. Violent words were exchanged below the gangway across the floor of the House, and things looked as bad as possible Freddy went off to summon Hartington. Bright made an excellent and strong appeal which had a great effect and after the division things quieted down Went off to bed about 2 30 A M

Wed, Feb 2. A memorable day Went to the House at 8 30 A M and found Biggar complacently obstructing At 9 both front benches were fully occupied, but not more than 200 members were present The P M loudly cheered. The Speaker succeeded Playfair, being also loudly cheered. He did not sit down and Biggar seemed uncertain what to do. Then the Speaker made a statement which will be for ever famous, speaking with the utmost gravity and dignity. The House was in a state of intense excitement, every member crowding in. The cheering was repeated and tremendous When the Speaker came in there were 5 Irishmen present, these as the statement developed itself, hastily sent messages for their colleagues, and when the Speaker ended, there were 15 or thereabout present, seeming to be taken quite aback The motion for the adjournment was lost by a vast majority Then the main question was put. Justin McCarthy rose and tried to speak The House would not permit it Then the Irishmen according to the advice apparently of O'Connor Power, rose, and shouting "Privilege", "Liberty" walked out of the House, some with dignity, others in wild and bitter excitement, their faces distorted with passion There was an ironical cheer, but most men I think could not help regretting the episode though they felt that it was absolutely inevitable and brought about by the perverseness of the Irish. The P M. in bringing forward his motion was loudly cheered, and the House adjourned for 3 hours.

The sitting, the longest in the history of Parliament, had occupied rather more than 41½ hours.

At 12 there was some fierce skirmishing between Parnell and Sullivan, the Speaker and the Gov^t Obstruction renewed but now supported by Irish Liberals and Churchill. Division at 5.35. After the division Biggar and Finigan¹ took the places of Cross and Northcote and proceeded to obstruct everything. The P.M. exercised by Northcote's amendments to the Motion and his general attitude of weakness. Having been taken into the confidence of the Gov^t and fallen in to some extent with their views, he now seems to have had his coat tails singed by the Tories and to have given in to them. His amendments emasculate the motion. The P.M. well—the task of facing obstruction prevents him from being worried by obstruction pure and simple.

Dined with Lord Chancellor, meeting Freddys [Lord and Lady F Cavendish], Thesiger, B. Hamilton, Montagu Bernard

Thursday, Feb 3 A memorable day again in Parliamentary history. Intense bitterness of the Irish (1) owing to events of Wednesday and (2) owing to Davitt's arrest. I was talking to a friend in the Lobby at question time when I heard a great noise in the House. I went in and saw Dillon on his legs with the House crammed with men shouting Order. The Speaker named him, and the P.M. moved that he be suspended during the sitting. Then followed the general disturbance. Dillon, Parnell, Finigan were suspended—then 28 of the Home Rulers *en masse*—then Molloy O'Kelly, R. Power, and O'Shaughnessy in turn. The opposition of the Parnellites was entirely broken up, the atmosphere of the House cleared as if by a thunder-storm, and the debate proceeded practically and calmly to its conclusion. The defeat of the Irish was complete. Parnell seems for once to have lost his head. The true explanation I believe of his action is this. The Irish were infuriated by the arrest of Davitt. Parnell put his question, determined if the answer was not satisfactory to move the adjournment. To his second question Harcourt did not reply. The Speaker motioned to the P.M. Parnell believed that he was rising to answer for Harcourt and paused. Then he found that the speech was begun on the motion before the House, and that he could not move the

¹ In the House he once accused a landlord of living on the sweat of other people's brows.

adjournment Dillon then forced his hand, being uncontrollable, and was suspended. The others had to choose between leaving Dillon in the lurch and sharing his fate. They chose the latter, and played completely into the hands of the Gov^t.

The debate on the motion was very satisfactory—the House was unanimous, and we ended up with a good party division on Northcote's amendment that the majority should consist of 300, beating the Tories by 84. The Preservation Bill was then declared to be urgent, and the House adjourned amid cheers.

Feb 4 Debate supremely dull, the Irish looking quite crestfallen and not mustering in force. Dined with the James's, the G^t People¹ and Alick Wood being there. The P M walking from the House found himself accompanied by 2 policemen² who waited to take him back. I walked with him to the House and when I got into the Lobby was met by an Inspector of Police who showed me a telegram they had received from the Glasgow Police to the effect that they had received information that Mr G's life would be attempted that night. I conferred with Howard Vincent³ and told him he had better see the P M and ask him to drive but had better not tell him of the telegram. We saw him in his room, and persuaded him that there was some risk of insult, etc and after a good deal of resistance he was persuaded to accept a growler. I went back with him about 11.15. He was in splendid spirits and good health, quite rejoicing in having so successfully turned the tables on the Irish. . .

I have quoted more than enough to show the turmoil and confusion in which the Government had to work. Mr. Gladstone was constantly in action. He was at the same time working on the intricacies of the Land Bill and preparing his Budget. Looking at events in cold blood, how was it humanly possible for him to watch everything and see that nothing went wrong? In these same months of January and February

¹ Sir Stephen Glynne's nickname for Mr and Mrs Gladstone

² I believe this was the first occasion of personal protection

³ Head of the C.I.D. at Scotland Yard.

events on the Natal frontier were moving towards disaster. Excepting for the brief discussion in January no one was thinking of them. Everyone was absorbed in the Irish drama.

The events in the first week of February brought the question of obstruction to a head. The Standing Orders and Rules of the House received drastic amendment.

Obstruction was not killed. In a limited form it persisted to the end of the Parliament. For example, we sat on March 11, 1884, a Saturday. After an Egyptian debate we had twelve hours of Irish obstruction. At about 5 A.M. my diary records that R. Grosvenor sent his messenger to bring members from their beds to stop the talking and prevent the scandal of the House sitting on Sunday *in daylight*. We adjourned at 5.45 A.M. having sat for nearly eighteen hours.

The Opposition agreed that procedure must be altered. When the Government, with the collaboration of the Speaker and Erskine May, produced successive batches of their proposals, then the measures to prevent obstruction were heavily obstructed by the Irish in chief. But the Tories took a large share, for there were constitutional matters of lasting importance and these were made the cover of much unnecessary talk. The "clôture" came in for strong opposition. It soon passed from the French pronunciation through "clocher" to closure. The time occupied would have been more than sufficient for the consideration of a first-class Act, and indeed, in value to the nation, this reform of procedure marks an epoch in Parliamentary history.

Great as was the difficulty of getting business done, it would have been far greater but for the influence of the Speaker. Full justice has not been done to Mr. Brand's high qualities. Frequently,

during the first three years, the House was in the hands of open, avowed obstructionists. Everything then depended on the personal authority of the Speaker. In temper incomparable, in dignity never failing, the genial charm of his presence endeared him to the House and even to the Irish party. On one occasion Biggar, having spoken after midnight for hours, observed that, as the Speaker seemed unable to hear him he would change his place. Gathering up an armful of blue-books, he moved up close to the Chair. The Speaker leant back, ineffably weary. "I see, Mr. Speaker," said Biggar, "that you are tired," and he sat down and the House rose. His rulings were sound and accurate and through the five years he made but one serious mistake, to which I have already referred. Irish and other obstructionists never spared the Government, but again and again they gave way to the forbearance and wisdom of the Speaker. No Speaker has had to face difficulties so great and so prolonged up to the time when the House armed itself with new powers in a drastic revision of its rules. To no Speaker does the House of Commons owe more for the maintenance of the dignity of debate according to its best traditions.

The historian who may write the completed history of the Whig party will find in the 1880 Parliament the scene of its final trial of strength with the new forces of Radicalism and advanced Liberalism. At its close the opposing forces stood in opposition so definite and defiant that unless Mr. Gladstone was able for some time longer to combine the services of Hartington and Chamberlain, final disruption was certain.

From the first it had been a struggle between the two sections. The Government was in fact a mild form of coalition, and suffered accordingly.

The Whigs did not like the Hares and Rabbits Bill, and were startled at the Bill to limit the Irish evictions which had sent countless recruits to the ranks of Irish irreconcilables in America. They upset the proposals of Mr Gladstone and Chamberlain for the grant of Irish local government. They saw in it a menace to their territorial privileges. Many of their leading men, like the Duke of Devonshire, the Duke of Westminster, Lords Dufferin, Carlingford, Kenmare, Listowel, Powerscourt, de Vesci, and others were Irish landlords. Local government in Ireland under the Grand Jury system was everywhere controlled by the landlords. Reform of Irish local government meant dispossession of territorial rights and powers. It was the opening of the "loyal minority" argument so strongly developed by the Whigs against Home Rule.

The trial of strength was an unequal contest. The Radicals had a free hand for pushing questions disliked by the Whigs because they could go to a division and force the Whig hand in the knowledge that no harm would be done to the Government. They might get Irish support, but the Tories would be against them and the Government would be secure. Had the Whigs so acted from their point of view the whole weight of the opposition might go with them and endanger the Government. Hartington could not allow that.

Chamberlain was under no such restriction. The free action of the Radicals in the House of Commons could therefore be used to strengthen the propaganda through Chamberlain's instrument, the National Liberal Federation. He had further advantages. The bulk of the Liberal centre was progressive and certainly not Whig. Mr. Gladstone himself, though relying on Whig

support in his Cabinet, was nearer to the Radicals than to the Whigs. Chamberlain was well aware of that. In May 1882, when a successor to Lord Frederick Cavendish had to be appointed, Chamberlain wished to take the post.

One day it so happened that I was talking about this to Arthur O'Connor, a leading Parnellite. He told me that Chamberlain had come to him and asked for his opinion. He replied, "Mr. Chamberlain, before I can answer I must ask you a question. If you go, is there anyone who will look after your interests in the Cabinet?" Chamberlain replied with an expletive, "Not one excepting the old man". Up to 1885 he was in cordial support of Mr. Gladstone.

Through the five years Mr. Gladstone was the persevering, perplexed, and sometimes the exasperated referee in the Cabinet, and the spokesman of both sections in the House of Commons.

With all these internal troubles Mr. Gladstone never relaxed his hold on the House. He worked two Finance Bills and the immensely complicated Irish Land Bill through committee almost unaided. In the many crises the main load of debate fell on him. By sheer force of speech and argument again and again the Government emerged from almost impossible situations. The end came in June 1885, not through a party crisis, but because the tension between Whigs and Radicals had reached a point when breakage was desired by both sections.

In first-class legislation the Parliament had been deficient. The course of the Government was a steeplechase over one great obstacle after another. There were blunders, falls, recoveries.

It offers many points of contrast to its two predecessors. The Parliament of 1868 is memorable for legislation and for the great *Alabama*

settlement. The Parliament of 1874 produced useful legislation of a non-contentious character. It was notable not for the purchase of the Suez Canal shares—a transaction behind its back—but for its definite entrance into Egyptian responsibilities ; and for the Treaty of Berlin.

I have summarised the events and work of the 1880 Parliament. In the wide range of its action, in decisions of historical importance, in the movement and development of parties, in new ideas and principles which were to operate on the political thought and quest of the future, it stands above its predecessors. It is difficult to find any five consecutive years of greater interest to the historian.

INTRODUCTORY NOTE TO CHAPTER III

IN 1874 Lord Carnarvon was appointed Colonial Secretary. What is now the Union territory of South Africa at that time consisted of a number of separate and independent British or Dutch provinces, in the south-west the Cape Colony, under responsible government, northwards, the Crown Colony of Griqualand West; the Orange Free State; the South African Republic (the Transvaal), eastwards, Natal. In and about these provinces were millions of Bantu natives.

Lord Carnarvon adopted the policy of South African Federation. President Burgers (Transvaal) was favourable. Concurrence was refused by the Cape Parliament. Mr Froude, a strong supporter of Lord Carnarvon, was commissioned to observe the position, and report to Lord Carnarvon. In 1875 he was nominated as a British representative on a Federation Conference, and actively engaged in a foolish campaign against the Cape Government. Carnarvon, ignoring the Cape Colony antagonism, determined to press his policy on South Africa. In September 1876 he sent Sir Theophilus Shepstone to South Africa, empowering him to take over the Transvaal. The Transvaal was annexed on April 12, 1877.

Sir Bartle Frere, the newly appointed Governor of the Cape Colony and High Commissioner, had no responsibility for the annexation, and only heard of it on April 16. A solemn pledge was given to the Transvaal Boers that they should be granted the fullest powers of self-government consistent with the authority of the Queen. Shepstone having entirely failed to satisfy the Transvaal Dutch, Sir Owen Lanyon was sent to take his place. His entire incompetence and failure to fulfil the pledge of the Government led to ever-increasing trouble and friction.

In 1879 Sir Bartle Frere was chiefly responsible for the Zulu War. In January 800 men of the 24th Regiment were killed at Isandhlwana. Wolseley was sent out to take command in Zululand. In June the Prince Imperial was killed. On July 4, before the arrival of Wolseley, the Zulu impis were broken at Ulundi by Chelmsford.

Relieved of the Zulu peril, the Transvaal Boers became more and more restive. Lord Hartington and Mr Gladstone had both condemned the annexation policy of the Government, and undoubtedly raised hopes in the Transvaal that the Liberals might be able, if they came into office, to reverse the policy. One effect of this was to check recourse to extreme action.

Lord Carnarvon resigned in January 1878, and Sir M. Hicks-Beach became Colonial Secretary.

In 1879 Wolseley was made administrator in the Transvaal. He issued a proclamation, declaring the Transvaal to be for ever an integral part of the British dominions in South Africa.

The despatches of Sir Bartle Frere, Lanyon, and Wolseley encouraged the Government at home to believe that the Boers were accepting the position. This, however, was very far from the truth, as the result showed.

No effort was made to fulfil the pledge given to the Boers in April 1877.

CHAPTER III

MAJUBA

Pleasure and revenge
Have ears more deaf than adders to the voice
Of any true decision.

SHAKESPEARE

WHEN Mr. Gladstone's Government came into office respect for the character and authority of Sir Bartle Frere, his own hope that federation might lead to self-government in South Africa, the strong—outrageously strong—commitments of Wolseley, the official assurances of Lanyon that the Boers were settling down, and no doubt indirectly, the pressure of Eastern, Afghan, and Irish affairs, induced the Cabinet to continue the Conservative policy. For this they cannot be blamed by the Conservatives. The utterances of Mr. Gladstone, and more particularly of Lord Hartington, condemned the Transvaal annexation but carried no pledge of reversal. The Government decided to give further trial to the policy of federation. This course could only have been justified by fulfilling the pledge of their predecessors to give to the Transvaal the fullest measure of self-government consistent with the authority of the Queen. Lord Kimberley, as the responsible minister, ought at once to have pressed this duty on his colleagues. Unfortunately he did not. He took no true measure of Lanyon, the administrator of the Transvaal. Even Mr. Chamberlain,

so keen and alert, and afterwards so powerful a champion of retrocession, failed to see the growing danger.

The bent of Mr. Gladstone's mind was absolute concentration on whatever he conceived to be his first duty at the time. His power of concentration gave him immense success in whatever work he took in hand himself. He could not give his full mind to the solution of every inherited difficulty. The problems of South Africa he seemed to put aside as not for him but for younger men. "For forty years I have regarded the South African question as the one great unsolved, perhaps insoluble problem of our colonial system." (House of Commons, July 25, 1881.) Even the Zulu War, which had so direct a bearing on the Transvaal outlook, attracted his attention rather as an illustration of a generally wrong and disturbing policy than by its meaning to South Africa. His mind, when not occupied by Eastern affairs and Afghan events, was almost absorbed in Irish affairs.

There was another mind even more engrossed in the Eastern Question. The rejection of the Berlin Memorandum had disastrous results. Concurred action being rendered impossible, Russia went to war with Turkey. Lord Beaconsfield's hostility encouraged Russia to play on English nerves by action in Afghanistan which provoked the Government to go to war with Afghanistan. Mr. Buckle shows clearly that so absorbed was the Government, and particularly Lord Beaconsfield, in the difficulties which immediately followed the rejection of the Berlin Memorandum that they entirely failed to follow and understand what was happening in South Africa.

Between 1874 and 1886 Lord Carnarvon was a prominent figure in three theatres of action. In

South Africa the Government approved his policy when it was wrong. In Eastern affairs, after a long struggle he resigned, unable to agree with either Lord Beaconsfield or Mr. Gladstone. In Ireland in 1885 his policy in the main was sound and right, but prohibited by the Government.

For the annexation of the Transvaal Lord Beaconsfield was responsible. Lord Carnarvon wrote to him on September 20, 1876,¹ proposing to send Shepstone to South Africa. He was to be empowered to take the Transvaal and become the first British Governor. Lord Carnarvon's idea was that the Transvaal Boers would accept the position, that the Boers in the Orange Free State would thereby be so pleased that they would voluntarily place themselves under the yoke, and so the whole policy of federation would be justified. The federation of nations usually connotes good-will and friendship. With the Cape Colony hostile, Carnarvon, in an odd confusion of mind, thought that all would come right if the Transvaal, against the will of its inhabitants, was taken possession of by the British.

The scheme was to be operated by a *permissive* Bill allowing the colonies to federate! This astonishing manœuvre was approved by the Conservative Government.

Mr. Buckle observes :

Beaconsfield, though a strong believer in federation for South Africa, appears to have had his doubts of this very forward policy, but his mind in this autumn of 1876 was occupied with the Eastern Question, and he deferred, as he seems to have done throughout Carnarvon's tenure of the Colonial Office, to his colleague's expert knowledge, and accepted, with whatever hesitation, his proposals.

So Lord Beaconsfield became responsible for the annexation. A more disastrous error it is

¹ Buckle's *Life of Disraeli*, vol. vi p. 414.

difficult to find. It violated the Sand River Convention of 1852. The Dutch were alienated. The Zulu disasters followed. Mischievous incompetence prevailed in the Transvaal till 1881. Then Majuba.

Lord Morley's indictment of Government action and inaction from 1877 up to the rising of the Boers in December 1880 cannot be challenged. Mr. Gladstone and his Cabinet and the Liberal party must also take their full share of responsibility.

The attack on the Government resolved itself into the formula that Mr. Gladstone, after Majuba, surrendered to force what he had hitherto refused to give to reason. It was a half-truth; it sufficed to obliterate the Conservative trail which led to disaster, and to place the Government at a heavy disadvantage.

Mr. Gladstone was the most loyal of men, not only to his political colleagues but also and invariably to departmental advisers and responsible naval and military commanders. At their expense he never justified himself. But looking coolly at the narrative forty-seven years later, the ineptitudes of the Colonial and War Departments are inexplicable.

For the sake of clearness it is essential to consider what occurred in three separate periods: from the annexation in 1877 up to January 10, 1881; second, from January 10 to the Ingogo action on February 8; and third, from February 8 to Majuba and afterwards.

1. In March 1877 I accompanied my brother Stephen, then Rector of Hawarden, who had had lung trouble, to Cape Town. We were the guests at Government House of Sir Bartle Frere, who, with Lady Frere, received us with great and most hospitable kindness. Then came the news that

Shepstone had hoisted the Union Jack at Pretoria. My earliest recollection of South African politics is the bad effect of this action on the Dutch at Cape Town. The visit led me, when three years later I got into Parliament, to take a special interest in South African affairs which never ceased.

It was a privilege to know Sir Bartle Frere, a man of great personal charm and a perfect host. Had his career been in England he would have been a great and leading politician. Outside the spirit of British home politics with all its give and take, trained in India to render distinguished service under wholly different conditions, he was selected to pursue Lord Carnarvon's policy of federation. Conditions in India and South Africa were poles apart. Of the Dutch, and more particularly of the Boer mind, unfortunately he had had no experience.

In 1877 none of the conditions necessary for any kind of unification were in existence. Federation was little more than a dream. Owing to the absence of railways in a huge country of great distances and "thirsts", communications were extremely slow. Natal was ready for any scheme suitable to her own position and interests. The Boers were well established in the Orange Free State. In the Transvaal, the Boer republic held its own against the natives with difficulty. Paul Kruger had taken Burgers' place as President in March. In the Cape Colony the Parliament declared that any movement towards federation should originate with the Cape Government and Parliament. Mr. Molteno, with higher statesmanship, held the opinion that federation depended on the people of South Africa. It was not to be. Lord Beaconsfield had blessed the federation policy of Mr. Froude, Lord Carnarvon, and Sir Theophilus Shepstone. Sir Bartle Frere landed

at Cape Town on March 28. On April 12 the British flag was hoisted at Pretoria. For this Sir Bartle Frere, who only heard of it on the 16th, was not responsible. He accepted it as not inconsistent with the federation policy. Perhaps misled by the friendly relations between the Dutch and British at the Cape, he did not seek knowledge of the Boers.

Of all the civilians and soldiers concerned in affairs between British and Boers till towards the close of the Boer War was there one who understood the true temperament and character of the Boers ? Lord Kitchener and Lord Methuen were the first men of distinction to come to knowledge. After the annexation in 1877, Lanyon, Wolseley, and Colley persisted in misjudgment, shallow and disastrous. They forgot these men were descendants of heroes fighting for liberty in the Low Countries ; of great sailors who had fought historic battles with the English. Of the fighting capacity of the Boers they spoke and wrote with contempt ! They ignored the Sand River Convention, by which the British gave to the emigrant farmers beyond the Vaal River the right to manage their own affairs, to govern themselves according to their own laws without any interference by the British Government.¹ They did not understand the inevitable bitterness caused by their headstrong action. The Boer farmers, with their passionate love of freedom, their tenacity in methods of mind and habits of life, were sober, sensible men, kindly, courteous, hospitable. Any time after 1877 a fair and sound settlement could have been made. But it was not to be. The Conservative and Liberal Governments were alike misled by their advisers on the spot.

Two years after his arrival Sir Bartle Frere

¹ See Theal's *History of South Africa since 1795*, vol. m p. 367.

went to war with the Zulus as if he had to deal with a hill tribe in India. Annexation had diverted the Zulu peril from the Transvaal to the British themselves. He did not see that the destruction of Cetewayo's formidable impis at once enabled the Transvaal Boers to concentrate against annexation. But he did his best to induce the Home Government to fulfil the definite and binding pledge which accompanied the hoisting of the British flag, that the fullest autonomy should be given to the Transvaal.

Lord Morley quotes a notable paragraph in Wolseley's¹ despatch of November 13, 1879, to the Colonial Secretary, Sir Michael Hicks-Beach.

The Transvaal is rich in minerals, gold has already been found in quantities and there can be little doubt that larger and still more valuable goldfields will sooner or later be discovered. Any such discovery would soon bring a large British population here. The time must eventually arrive when the Boers will be in a small minority as the country is very sparsely peopled, and would it not therefore be a very near-sighted policy to recede now from the position we have taken up here, simply because for some years to come the retention of 2000 or 3000 troops may be necessary to reconsolidate our power?

He might have added what was so obviously in his mind—"and we shall have the gold".

This was a clear injunction to the Government to hold on to annexation by military force until the British swarming to the goldfields got a constitutional majority. The swarm came indeed to the Reef, but the Boers retained their majority. Lord Morley contented himself with the somewhat enigmatic comment, "This pregnant and far-sighted warning seems to have been little considered by English statesmen of either party at

¹ Wolseley, after the Zulu war, was in temporary charge of the Transvaal.

this critical time or afterwards, though it proved a vital element in any far-sighted decision" Lord Morley could not have meant that the existence of gold justified an action which was morally wrong and politically unwise. To Lord Morley its " pregnancy " probably lay in the forecast of the Reef development and as calling from a wise government the granting of a constitution which would have secured in later days the rights and liberties of all classes.

The Conservatives left office in 1880, having, in their policy of annexation and their failure for three years to redeem their promises, created the cause of armed rebellion under their successors. Their responsibility is not lessened by the fact that their successors failed to stem the tide of danger. The common use of the word " Majuba " as if it implicated the Liberal Government alone in a disastrous and discreditable blunder resting entirely on Mr. Gladstone is unjust. The greatest Prime Ministers, in the light of history, have made grave mistakes. But with the subsidence of partisanship it is easier to measure responsibility and apportionate it fairly.

The Cabinet decided at once to reverse the Candahar policy of their predecessors. Ought they also to reverse the Transvaal annexation ? Mr. Gladstone more than once had severely criticised it. Lord Hartington, as leader of the Liberal Opposition, had, on February 5, 1880, spoken more definitely. " If we find it more honourable to restore the former Government no false sense of our dignity being involved ought to stand in the way." There was no actual commitment in these utterances. Lord Hartington's own words very clearly implied inquiry and examination. The words no doubt led the Boers to hope for a change of policy by the Liberals.

This hope—fortunately for the Conservatives—delayed action. When, under the Liberal Government, the Boers lost hope, they took the field.

The Government cannot be blamed at the outset for continuing the federation plan until they had had time to survey the situation for themselves. Their advisers in South Africa and at the Colonial Office supported federation. Mr. Gladstone had great respect for Sir Bartle Frere and his opinions, and still thought there was a chance for federation.

At the opening of the new Parliament the Government passed into heavy weather. Party acerbity, under the stimulus of Parnell and Randolph Churchill, was at its height through the session. Throughout the year, up to December 11, the three responsible advisers of the Government in the Transvaal, Sir Garnet Wolseley, Sir G. Colley, and Major Lanyon, gave strong assurances that the Boers were becoming reconciled to the position. This explains, but it cannot excuse, seven months of inaction.

Then in December President Brand spoke out. He pointed to the growing danger of the position and the immediate necessity for conciliatory action. No man knew the facts more completely. He knew that his own people were in strong sympathy with the Transvaal Boers. It was the wise advice of a friend. Lord Kimberley, in his despatch of December 31, rejected his counsel on totally insufficient grounds. By this time the Government had had full time for reviewing the situation. Their decision was disastrous.

Lord Kimberley, through a long life, did much notable service to his country. His speeches invariably reached a high standard of excellence. But habitually he lacked initiative. He came to decisions too often at the last moment.

This story which he told me himself was characteristic. Lord Salisbury was to speak on a motion of condolence on the death of Queen Victoria, and, as leader of the Opposition, Lord Kimberley was to second it. "In the morning I began thinking of what I should say and nothing came to my mind. I made no progress and at last started for the House of Lords without knowing what to say. On the way I met — and we talked about partridge shooting. When we got to the House I was most uncomfortable and thought I was going to make a mess of it. But when I got on my legs ideas came and my friends were good enough to say that I did very well."

Lord Kimberley ought to have realised the Transvaal position and to have pressed it on his colleagues. To me his failure is hard to understand except on the broad truth that in England we did not understand South Africa. Wrong as, by the light of events, was the policy of the Government, they had no option, when the Boers attacked the British garrisons and advanced on Natal, but to meet force with force. On the advice mainly of Wolseley and also of Colley, who succeeded him, our troops had been reduced by about 10,000 since August 1879. At the time of the Boer outbreak we had but 3510 regular troops in South Africa.

But when Parliament opened on January 6, the load which Mr. Gladstone had to bear made concentration on any one subject extremely difficult. He had to face the fierce attacks of the regular Opposition, of the Fourth Party, and of the Parnellites on the Address debate; to wind up the Afghan War and settle the Candahar question in the teeth of strong Conservative opposition; he had to help Mr. Forster to force

through his Coercion Bill ; as Chancellor of the Exchequer to work on the coming Budget ; and he had every day to deal with organised obstruction.

The debate on the Address continued from the 6th to the 21st of January—twelve days of talking. On the 25th the House sat till 9 A.M. the following morning on Mr. Gladstone's resolution to take all the days for Government business. The resolution was carried on the night of the 26th, the House adjourning at 2.30 A.M. On the 27th Mr. Forster introduced the Protection of Persons and Property Bill. Adjournment 1.10 A.M. On the 28th the debate continued and at 11 P.M. Mr. Gladstone spoke for an hour and a half. The first reading was carried and the House adjourned at 12.45 A.M.

Such were the conditions under which the Government had to carry on the business of a world-wide empire. Events were moving fast on the Natal border. But not even the reverses of Laing's Nek and the Ingogo broke the absorption of the House in Irish affairs. Ireland was in the grasp of the Land League, law was being openly defied, crime was increasing and convictions could not be secured. This ominous condition, accompanied as it was by a determined attempt to cripple the House of Commons itself, dulled men's vision of events seven thousand miles away.

There was another explanation of the inaction of Parliament. It is the main function of the Opposition to attack faulty acts of commission or omission by the Government. But as regards South Africa the fault of the Government was in equal degree the fault of the Opposition. Conservatives could not blame the Government for not departing from the federation policy, and to

attack them for not giving self-government to the Transvaal involved their own condemnation. The Opposition itself was as blind to the Transvaal danger as the Colonial Office and the Government.

So we reach the climax in the dismal story of annexation and its unhappy maintenance by both parties. For the Boer rebellion in December 1880 both were responsible. Throughout, the Colonial Secretaries of State, who backed a wrong action and refused to discharge the concurrent obligation, must take a leading share of the blame. I pass to the second period—to the change in the policy of the Liberal Government, and Majuba.

2. Lord Kimberley's rejection on December 30 of President Brand's proposals was perhaps the Government's greatest error. On January 6 it was declared in the Queen's speech that vindication of Her Majesty's authority had put aside any plan of self-government for the Transvaal. Nevertheless the long night of inanition had finally closed. The new departure actually opened on January 10, 1881.

In view of all that has been written on Majuba, on the subsequent action of the Government, and on alleged consequences it might well be supposed that Parliament in 1880 was on the alert, calling attention to the imminent danger and urging the Government to effective action. But there was nothing of the sort. If confirmation is needed there is the evidence of Hansard. Sir Henry Lucy published his diary of the 1880 Parliament. In January 1881 his pages are full of Irish affairs and obstruction. There is no reference to South Africa. He does not even mention Laing's Nek and the Ingogo defeats.

Parliament and the country had got so indurated to the policy of lethargy and neglect over Transvaal affairs since 1877 that the public mind was practically a blank.

But, for a few hours, on January 21, 1881, the curtain was raised. An amendment was moved to the Address calling on the Government to make clear its position on the Transvaal. Mr. Gladstone pointed out in his speech the necessity to vindicate the Queen's authority and that, as regards further action, it was not the moment for "specific declarations". The Government anxiously looked forward to the time when they could confer free institutions on the Transvaal. He was glad that the instructions to Sir Hercules Robinson had not been the subject of adverse comment. He spoke highly of President Brand, whose action had imposed two alternatives on the Government. Either they must be insensible to his amicable spirit; or they must communicate their own views with regard to the particular proposals so far as it was within the lines of Government duty. The Government would resolutely and promptly establish the authority of the Crown and "pursue such a policy for the full settlement of the question as will deserve and receive the approval of the House and country".

The Government, in fact, owing mainly to Brand's intervention and the strong views of Chamberlain, had resolved, since the introduction of the Queen's speech, to change their policy, but were not in a position to give details. Mr. Gladstone did not anticipate the headlong action of Sir G. Colley, who was actually preparing to attack Laing's Nek. Sir Stafford Northcote's reply was important and significant.

There was one part of the speech of my Rt Hon. friend to which I listened with the greatest pleasure and sympathy.

It was the concluding passage of the telegram from that distinguished man, the President of the Orange River Free State; and when he said that it was the earnest desire of Her Majesty's Government and even their hope that it might be possible to bring about the results which President Brand wished. There never was any doubt in the mind of the late Government that it was most desirable that it should, as far as possible, harmonise the institutes of the Transvaal with the wants and wishes and the natural feelings of its people. We have no desire to live in hostility with them—far from it. We have every desire that they should live under institutions suited to them . . . I do earnestly trust that the House will sustain *not only in the letter but also in the spirit Her Majesty's Government in the course which they are now taking.*

The mover, Mr. P. Rylands, wished to withdraw his amendment. Leave being refused, it was negatived by a large majority.

So, after full debate, the Opposition and the House of Commons formally approved the course the Government was taking in opening communications with the Transvaal in the letter and more particularly in the spirit of President Brand's words. Let it be noted that nothing was said about avenging Bronkhorstspruit.¹ A settlement with the Transvaal was the expressed desire of the House.

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A general idea still remains that retrocession was in consequence of the Majuba disaster. The sequence of events has been largely forgotten or, by a new generation, is not known. It will be best understood by brief notes in parallel columns of action taken at home and in South Africa.

¹ Some 250 men of the 94th regiment were ambushed by the Boers. Colonel Anstruther died of wounds, and 120 officers and men were killed or wounded.

1880

*At home**South Africa.*

Dec 6 President Brand urges necessity of action to avoid collision

Dec 16 Transvaal Boers proclaim republic under Kruger, Pretorius, and Joubert (Commandant-General)

Dec 20 British detachment attacked at Bronkhoëspruit.

Dec 30 Kimberley receives Brand's warning. Replies that the time was not opportune.

1881

Jan. 10 Kimberley replies to Brand that provided the Boers ceased from armed opposition the Government did not despair of making a satisfactory settlement.

Jan 10 Brand again urges steps to prevent further bloodshed.

Jan. 12 Brand telegraphed that not a moment was to be lost. A commissioner should be sent to the Boers with proposals for a settlement.

Jan 23. Colley called on Boer leaders to disperse. If so, he would forward statement of grievances to London.

Jan 26 Kimberley instructs Sir Hercules Robinson (newly arrived as Governor at Cape Town) to inform Brand that if armed opposition should at once cease, the Government would endeavour to frame a satisfactory scheme.

Jan. 28. Colley attacks Boers at Laing's Nek and is repulsed.

Jan 29 Brand, replying to Kimberley's telegram of the 26th (unaware of Colley's attack), advises that Boers should be at once informed.

At home

Feb 8 Kimberley directs Colley to inform Brand that the Government would be ready to give all reasonable guarantees as to treatment of Boers after submission if they ceased from armed opposition, and a scheme would be framed for permanent friendly settlement

South Africa.

Feb 8 Colley operates on Ingogo river and is repulsed.

John Brand stands and will assuredly always stand as one of the finest figures in South African history. Elected President in 1877, he surmounted great difficulties, and under his wise and inspiring leadership by 1880 he had brought the Orange Free State to contentment and prosperity. It was termed a "model State". There was no distinction between his people and the Boers of the Transvaal. They had all trekked from the Cape to seek freedom and independence in the north. Friendly to the British, understanding fully the course of events in the Transvaal, he was the one man whose counsel throughout was wise and right. But the Conservative, and for a time the Liberal Government relied on very different men. In his lucid story of annexation and its consequences Mr. Carter says :

If Sir Bartle Frere disappointed and grieved the leaders of the agitation, Sir Garnet Wolseley, by his vain threats and high-handed action, increased the volume of discontent tenfold, and did more to stir up a spirit of hostility to the English, and add to the ranks of malcontents, than can be told. There were now two essentially military men who had to deal with the Transvaal, both Colonel Lanyon and Sir Garnet Wolseley despised the Boer race, and despising them, did their best to bring matters to a head, in fact to test the Dutch courage to see if there was the shadow of anything but wordy warfare in these malcontents.¹

Brand saw what the result would be and, as the

¹ *A Narrative of the Boer War*, T. F. Carter, 1882, p. 68.

months passed, became increasingly insistent. Shepstone—a forceful and able man—had left the Transvaal in January 1879. His administration had not been without good results. Had he remained, his own insight would, in all probability, have led him to fulfil his own solemn promises. Major Lanyon followed him, but there was no improvement. Sir Bartle Frere in April had to go himself to the Transvaal to deal with Boer discontents. He left them discontented, but from that time onward he urged the Government to make good the pledge of 1877. Lord Kimberley and the Colonial Office misjudged the position. To recall Frere and leave Lanyon was a grave mistake. Even so had the Liberal Government paid earlier attention to the warnings of President Brand the situation would have been saved.

The curse of Ireland seemed to have reached the Transvaal. "All is well" still came from Lanyon. In December the Boers rose in arms, declared their independence, and invested the weak British garrisons. Lord Kimberley's reply was of the old Irish stock. Nothing to be done until law and order had been vindicated. That was on December 30, 1880, and the decision was confirmed in the Queen's speech on January 6, 1881. Four days later came the new departure. President Brand got into Downing Street. Of this I have personal knowledge.

As a very junior Lord of the Treasury, of brief Parliamentary experience, I looked with awe and complete confidence on the leading statesmen of the day. Now I began to have some doubt of their infallibility.

By this time Donald (afterwards Sir Donald) Currie had established his famous Castle line. A keen, shrewd Scotchman, he took an active interest

in all that concerned the peace and prosperity of South Africa. He had close friendship with Brand and he was member for Perthshire in the House of Commons. He was in constant communication with the President and found in me a ready medium of communication with Mr. Gladstone.

On Jan. 10 Brand's insistence at last weighed in against the official "experts" in South Africa. He was not content with official letters. He told Currie that if the war continued he would not be able to restrain his own people. "But for the restraining hand of President Brand", said Mr. Cana,¹ "the Free State would probably have gone to war; as it was, a considerable number of its burghers did join the Transvaal forces. Thousands of Dutch in Cape Colony were prepared to intervene with arms in their hands." If the Free State joined the Transvaal what would be the effect on the Cape Dutch? Colley's misfortunes did not divert Brand from the only course which he considered safe and right. Currie showed me his letters and strongly supported his views. From my diary I give these entries.

Monday, Feb. 28 [the day after Majuba]. Heard of the terrible Transvaal disaster and Colley's death. . . . Came back to dine alone with Father [unclear]. Interesting talk about S Africa. I doubted Kimberley's statesmanship; and pressed on him Donald Currie's view of the situation—the danger of Sprigg² being ousted and replaced by a Government with strong Dutch sympathies. Colley has, I fear, strained his instructions. He was told that the Government, while they did not wish to impede him so far as the military position was concerned, desired a cessation of fighting while terms were being discussed

¹ *South Africa from the Great Trek to the Union*, F. R. Cana (Chapman and Hall, 1909).

² Prime Minister of the Cape Colony.

Tuesday, March 1. Talk with D Currie—home to dinner Gave him [Mr Gladstone] D C.'s letter to read and pressed on his Cape views

Thursday, March 3 Visit from Donald Currie in the morning He had just heard from Brand to the effect that Kruger had his [Colley's] telegrams and proposals under consideration when Colley attacked He told me of the unofficial proposals that he sent to the Boers on Feb 12th Communicated his views to Father Currie interviewed Kimberley. K came to see Father Result that Currie was told that it was impossible for the Government to sanction his actions semi-officially but that he had better send back to Brand the answer he thought best. Talked this over with D C in the House—he sent to Brand a message to the effect that if a proposal for an armistice came to the Government from Joubert it might be entertained.

I closed this entry with the observation :

I think he [D. C.] has acted with vigour, judgment and consistency in the matter and that his services will prove of great use to the Government and force Kimberley to move more quickly and decidedly.

Forty-five years later I read these entries with but one regret. Mr. Gladstone, like all right-minded administrators, when he could not depend on his own knowledge and experience based his action on the best authority available—the responsible men in official posts. No governments in my experience have been so unwisely served as were those of Lord Beaconsfield and Mr. Gladstone in South African affairs. My regret is that Donald Currie did not become an intermediary a year earlier.

A review of events between January 10 and January 28 inevitably suggests two criticisms on the action of the Government.

The first is that no intimation was given to the public of the change of Ministerial policy. The Cabinet decided that on the facts conciliation was

right. Laing's Nek followed Bronkhorstspruit, Ingogo followed Laing's Nek, and finally Majuba. Then suddenly the public knew that retrocession was in the air. Surrender after defeat ! Indignation and wrath, especially in the Army, were natural enough. True, the debate in the House of Commons on January 21 may be said to indicate clearly that the Government had decided on a policy of conciliation before Laing's Nek. It made no impression on the general public, perhaps because the Conservatives approved—let this not be forgotten—the conciliatory action of the Government. By their reticence the Government seriously increased their subsequent difficulties.

But there was a yet more serious omission. Colley was the general in command of all troops in South Africa.¹ He was also Governor of the Transvaal. Therefore he had civil as well as military responsibilities. There was thus a double reason for giving him the fullest information of the vitally important communications which were taking place between the Home Government, President Brand, and Sir Hercules Robinson. It should have been obvious to all concerned that military action, taken solely on tactical grounds, might have disastrous results on the political situation. Yet what do we find ? Having resolved to follow up Brand's suggestions on January 10, and opened up communications with the Boers, the Government failed to take Colley into confidence and to warn him in time against any action not urgently required in the field which might conflict with the definite negotiations they had in view. Colley complains on January 17, "Lord Kimberley has simply sent me his replies to deputations without comment".² Messages to

¹ Colley succeeded Wolseley.

² Butler's *Life of Colley*, p 325.

and from Brand were not reported to him. So Colley felt himself "entirely unfettered".

Lord Kimberley, as Colonial Secretary, should have given full information and instruction to the Governor of the Transvaal. Mr. Childers, as War Secretary, was in a position to co-ordinate the political and military considerations in his communications with Colley. The omission was a grave error and the result was Colley's attack on Laing's Nek, which led to other and more disastrous events.

On December 11, 1880, Lanyon wrote to Colley: "They [the Boers] are incapable of any united action, and they are mortal cowards, so anything they may do will be but a spark in the pan". Not even a flash! Can any words more succinctly sum up the value of Lanyon's opinions? Five days later came the Boer proclamation of independence.

Colley himself had to gather truth. He looked on Kruger and Joubert merely as agitators. He had reduced the British garrison. When the Boers rose in arms he thought they had entered on a hopeless contest. Later in the year Lord Wolseley, while eulogising Colley's professional abilities, said to me: "He had one serious defect. He always thought he could succeed with half the men who were really necessary. He was military adviser to Lord Lytton and this led to disaster in the Afghan War. So it was in South Africa."

Of Colley the Queen on March 6, 1881, recorded an opinion of Lord Roberts: "He [Sir G. Colley] was an able man but inexperienced in handling troops".

He was a right-minded and honourable man, eager to do his best. His letter of January 1, 1881, clearly shows excellent intentions and that he saw the danger of conflict between Dutch and

British. But his military instincts took possession of him. He must punish the Boers for Bronkhorstspruit and relieve invested garrisons.

With a scratch force, "not even compact or homogeneous in its smallness," says Butler,¹ he left Newcastle on January 10 for Laing's Nek. On January 10—the very day on which the Government had settled to follow Brand's advice. As in the following year the Phoenix Park tragedy broke up the new departure, so now Colley's action brought disaster. It is only fair to say that at this moment the Government should have cabled to him full and definite information of their intentions.

Writing on January 21 to his wife, Colley said :

I have not had a word of any kind from either Colonial or War Secretaries, and am thus left entirely unfettered and to my own discretion

Completely underestimating the fighting capacities of the Boers, Colley attacked Laing's Nek. Still in ignorance of the policy of the Government, he wrote to Joubert calling on the Boers to disperse, with a conditional promise to forward to London any statement of their grievances. But he did not wait for a reply. He had collected some 1500 men, "as queer a mixture as ever was brought together," he said.² The general, says Butler, was bound to attempt the "forlorn hope" of Laing's Nek. But the very fact that it was "forlorn hope" made it a blunder. Even if the Nek had been carried, Colley, with his weak force, could not have advanced into the Transvaal without strong reinforcements. These were actually on their way and with them Colley, beyond doubt, would have captured the Nek, and

¹ Butler's *Life of Colley*, p. 281.

² *Ibid* p. 282.

have been able to advance. On the other hand, defeat would be in every way disastrous. So, with the "queer mixture", he attacked on January 28, and failed. "I should have got lots of kudos if I had succeeded," he wrote to Lord Wolseley, "dispersed this revolt, and relieved the unfortunate Transvaal garrisons."

Vanity of vanities. Infantry 2200, cavalry 450, with 8 guns were close to Newcastle.

Two days before—on January 26—Lord Kimberley instructed Sir Hercules Robinson to send a friendly message to Brand which presumably and not unreasonably he thought Brand would forward to the Boers. This to the accompaniment of Colley's guns! But Brand replied that the Boers should be told of this at once. Could there be worse bungling? Kimberley in London to Robinson at Cape Town, Robinson to Brand in the Free State, Brand to Robinson, Robinson to the Boers. Worse was to come. Even experience brought no change in the methods of the Colonial Office. On February 8 Kimberley does give information to Colley, whom he instructs to send a further conciliatory message—to Brand. Why not to Joubert, one of the Transvaal triumvirate, and in command at the Nek? Yet even that would have been too late because Colley, by a flank movement on the very day—the 8th—again came into collision with the Boers at the Ingogo. It was not a defeat, but he was crippled by heavy losses and it had all the appearance of a defeat.

Up to February 8 Colley's reverses were due to military errors of judgment. On the political side blame must rest with Kimberley and Childers for their dilatory, roundabout methods.

Colley was now confined to his fortified camp at Mount Prospect. For the next three weeks

the Government pursued and developed the conciliation policy. Meanwhile strong reinforcements, under Sir Evelyn Wood, reached Newcastle. From these Colley brought to Mount Prospect camp a battalion of the Black Watch, fresh from Afghanistan in splendid condition. Cavalry had been his great deficiency, but now he also brought from Newcastle 450 men of the 15th Hussars. As compared with the force which attacked the Nek on January 26—that “queer mixture” of about 1500 men—he had now 3200 infantry and 450 cavalry. A strong reserve column was in Natal.

Writing to Mr. Childers Colley expressed his appreciation of the support given to him by the Government.

Unquestionably he was now in a position to vindicate the Queen’s authority in the field.

It is necessary to turn to Colley’s views on the political situation. He had now realised that the Government had decided to construct a plan of settlement. He had heard of one suggestion designed to give security to the natives by a division of Transvaal territory. To this he was strongly opposed. There were two alternatives for the Government—retrocession or a liberal constitution.

He recommended the second alternative. It is evident that he was now in full possession of the intentions of the Government. At the same time it was inevitable that he should wish to re-establish his own military reputation. Quite sincerely he thought that a successful attack would have that result and at the same time place the Government in a stronger position to make political concessions.

I continue the statement of events in parallel columns (see p. 215).

1881

*At home**South Africa*

Feb 12 Kruger's letter to Colley—he was certain that if the truth reached them the Government would be on the side of the Boers. They would not fear the result of a commission. Ready, if troops were withdrawn from the Transvaal, to retire from their position and give the commission a free passage (This letter was "evidently" sent from Laing's Nek by Kruger)

Feb 13 Kruger's letter to Colley reached the Colonial Office

Feb 15 Cabinet Mr. Gladstone informs the Queen that, viewing the likelihood of early and sanguinary actions, Lord Kimberley thought that the receipt of such an overture at such a junction, although its terms were inadmissible, made it a duty to examine whether it afforded any hope of settlement.

Feb. 16 Kimberley directs Colley to inform Boers that, on their desisting from armed opposition the Government were ready to send commissioners to develop a scheme of settlement and that meanwhile, if this proposal was accepted, the English general was authorised to agree to the suspension of hostilities

Feb. 17. Colley's cable of 17th received by the Colonial Office at 8 p m Colley was told by the War Office that as regards the interval before receiving a reply from Mr. Kruger, the Government did

Feb 17. Colley receives Kimberley's message of the 16th and replied that "he will communicate with Kruger accordingly."

At home.

not bind his discretion "We are anxious for your making arrangements to avoid effusion of blood"

Feb. 19. Government replied through Lord Kimberley to Colley. The garrisons were to be free to provision themselves and peaceful intercourse allowed. But "we do not mean that you should march to the relief of the garrisons or occupy Laing's Nek if the arrangement proceeds Fix reasonable time within which answer must be sent by Boers."

South Africa.

Feb 19 Colley asked the meaning of suspension of hostilities Was he to leave Laing's Nek in Boer occupation and our garrisons isolated and short of provisions, or was he to occupy Laing's Nek and relieve the garrisons?

South Africa.

Feb 21. Colley writes to Kruger at Laing's Nek that, on the Boers ceasing from armed opposition, the Queen would appoint a commission "Upon this proposal being accepted within forty-eight hours from the receipt of this letter" he was authorised to agree to a suspension of hostilities on the part of the British

Feb. 23 Colley wrote to Childers (War Minister) that he would not, without strong reason, undertake any operation likely to bring on another engagement until Kruger's reply was received.

Feb 24. General Smidt (according to Boer statements) received Colley's letter, acknowledged it the same day, and adds that he had despatched the letter to Mr. Kruger at Heidelberg and told the messenger to drive his horse as hard as he could¹. The letter could not reach Mr. Kruger in less than two days (Feb. 26), nor could his answer come back in less than four (Feb. 28).

Feb 26 General Colley, with Colonel Herbert Stewart, closely inspects Majuba. After nightfall a selected force of 554 men occupy the summit.

Feb. 26 "An intimation seems to have been made by the Boer leader to Colley's military secretary, Colonel Stewart, that after all Kruger was not at Heidelberg, but had been called away to Rustenberg, a place still more

¹ Butler's *Life of Colley*, p. 357.

remote, and that consequently there must be a further delay in sending a reply to the letter of Feb. 21."¹

Feb. 27 Colley, not anticipating attack, does not intrench at the top, and allows his men to rest.

Feb. 27 Boers advance up Majuba at 7 30 A M, and at 1 P M storm the summit. Sir G. Colley killed in action.

Colley never mentioned to the Government the possibility of occupying Majuba. In camp he kept his intention, which seems to have only matured on the 26th, a close secret until after lights were out on the night before the attack, and the men were turned out.

He had told Kruger that he must have a reply within forty-eight hours.

He had been instructed by the Government to write to Kruger and await Kruger's answer *for a reasonable time*.

General Smidt, on the 24th, told him that the letter had been sent on to Kruger and that a reply could not be expected before the 28th. Further word was sent on the 26th to say that the delay would be longer.

Colley apparently took General Smidt's acknowledgment as Kruger's reply and ascended Majuba on the night of the 26th. He had been definitely ordered not to attack the Nek. The occupation of Majuba was an aggressive flank movement to make the Nek untenable and to force the Boers to retire. The summit of Majuba had been daily occupied by a Boer outpost which apparently had been withdrawn at nightfall. But until Colley reached the top he could not be sure that there would be no resistance. Laing's Nek could have been taken by a frontal or an outflanking attack. The Majuba flank movement was an attack on the Nek. Colley thought that the summit, once occupied, would be unassailable and

¹ Butler's *Life of Colley*, pp. 357-8.

that the Boers would be forced to retreat from the Nek. It was a direct challenge. The Boers accepted the challenge at once. With the greatest skill and daring they won the day. To argue that the occupation of Majuba was not an attack on the Nek is mere casuistry.

How, on his instructions, could Colley justify this attack ? Sir William Butler makes the best case he can, but what is it ?

Although the Boers might not unreasonably suppose that the term of forty-eight hours named for acceptance might be extended to meet the altered circumstances of distance now alleged by them, there was not, so far as I can discover, a word, hint, or action on the part of Sir George Colley to make them imagine that any suspension of hostilities had been even tacitly arrived at pending the receipt of Mr Kruger's answer¹

There had been firing and movements on the 24th and 25th. Butler suggests that Colley, wishing to avoid even the semblance of a misconception, might not have chosen to exercise fully his belligerent rights during the forty-eight hours named for the acceptance ; but that it cannot be supposed that he was bound to allow further delays to affect his action beyond that time.

It is true that minor warlike operations took place on both sides during the forty-eight hours. The Boers, according to Butler, contented themselves with some inconsiderable addition to trenches on the Nek.²

Whether the Boers expected the direct menace of Colley's occupation of Majuba may be strongly doubted in view of their knowledge that negotiations for peace between the British Government and Kruger were actually taking place. The daily Boer outpost had been withdrawn from Majuba—

¹ Butler's *Life of Colley*, p 358.

² *Ibid* p. 358.

significant enough. In any case Butler's own words suggest in a negative form that it would have been better if Colley had not chosen to exercise his belligerent rights during the forty-eight hours. But he adds, "it cannot be supposed that he was bound to allow further delays to affect his action beyond that time"

Butler's words are not clear, but they suggest that he bases himself on the argument that the forty-eight hours had actually expired when Colley moved up Majuba. But had they expired?

This is the text of Colley's letter to Kruger.

Feb. 21, 1881.

SIR,—I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 12th instant

In reply I am to inform you that on the Boers now in arms against Her Majesty's authority ceasing armed opposition, Her Majesty's Government will be ready to appoint a Commission with large powers who may develop the scheme referred to in Lord Kimberley's telegram of the 8th instant communicated to you through His Honour, President Brand.

I am to add that upon this proposal being accepted within forty-eight hours, I have authority to agree to a suspension of hostilities on our part.

I have the honour, &c.

G. POMEROY-COLLEY,
Major-General Commanding Forces.

P. KRUGER, Esq.

The letter was to Kruger. Everything depended on Kruger's reply. Colley had been directed to await his *reply* "for a reasonable time". He named *acceptance* within forty-eight hours. He was then told, first that Kruger was at Heidelberg, and (on the 26th) that he was at Rustenberg. He knew that Kruger's reply could not possibly arrive before March 2. The reply might be, as it actually was, *acceptance*. Yet on the 26th, without waiting for the reply which he knew he could

not have received, and from no fault of Kruger's, he ordered the ascent after nightfall.

Apparently he treated General Smidt's acknowledgment of the receipt of the letter to Kruger as the date of the receipt of the letter. Assuming that this extraordinary decision was true, we are not even told the hour when General Smidt received the letter. But that is a minor point. The main fact is that Colley had been ordered to fix "a reasonable time" within which to receive Kruger's reply *after he had received the letter*. Sir William Butler in his *apologia* was evidently not comfortable. The "reasonable" time having expired (though by no possible chance could Kruger's answer have been received) he says, "it cannot be supposed that he [Sir George Colley] was bound to allow further delays, *however unavoidable*, to affect his action. . . . What if the Boer President went still further away? Meantime our garrisons remained unrelieved."

As to the garrisons, the occupation of Majuba was not calculated to relieve them. Immediate relief could only be given by Kruger's acceptance of the Government terms.

The sum of the whole matter was this. Colley was ordered to send to Kruger a definite proposal for peace. He was ordered to name a reasonable time for Kruger's reply. Believing Kruger to be at Laing's Nek, Colley fixed it at forty-eight hours. When he was told that Kruger had gone to Heidelberg or Rustenberg he knew perfectly well that Kruger's reply could not possibly reach him on the 26th though despatched forthwith. In full knowledge of this he moved up Majuba on the 26th, intending to occupy the summit whether the Boers were there or not. It was a definite act of war, and contrary to his instructions.

When Kruger received Colley's letter on the 26th,

he decided at once to accept the terms, on the very day that Colley seized Majuba.¹

Turning to the home situation, Butler urges that Colley had been denied the right to occupy Laing's Nek "if the arrangement proceeded. But supposing it did not proceed—was he to be debarred in the interval before reply to his proposal was received from making any movement or taking up any position within the territory of Natal, which might strengthen his own line or render that of the Boers less tenable ? "

This dubious passage suggests that the Government plan had not "proceeded". It had in fact proceeded so far that General Smidt had forwarded the proposal to Kruger, upon whose reply, which Colley had not and to his knowledge could not have received, all depended. Butler tries to supplement this weak point by the *non sequitur* that after all and in any case Colley was justified in strengthening his own position in Natal. But Colley's action was a flank attack on the Nek, and this had been expressly forbidden.

Colley, in fact, acted contrary to the Government instructions. Beyond doubt he thought he was acting for the best. But for the plan of the Government he substituted his own which, even as a purely military manœuvre, ended in a lamentable disaster.

By his action he directly compromised not only the policy but the good faith of the Government. The Boers could say, and did widely say, that the British proposed terms of settlement and threw the Boers off their guard. Then their troops attacked.

It remains absolutely clear that for the Majuba

¹ The reply was despatched on the 28th expressing gratitude for the declaration of H M Government that under certain conditions they were ready to cease hostilities. The Transvaal leaders agreed to a meeting to determine the preliminaries of an honourable peace. The reply was not received by Sir Evelyn Wood till March 7.

action the Government had no responsibility whatever. Colley acted not only against the spirit but the very letter of his instructions. He was a gallant and distinguished soldier, and his mistake came from his intense desire to re-establish the military position and at the same time, as I believe he honestly thought, to help the Government. Whether success in his action would have facilitated a friendly understanding with the Boers may well be doubted. In any case it was wrong. Sir George Colley has taken his place in the long roll of gallant men who unflinchingly did their best and gave their lives for England. Criticism of his action belongs to history and is not derogatory to his honour.

Mr. Trevelyan, in his *History of England*, says (p. 668):

The vacillation of the British Government, particularly Gladstone, in deciding on a settlement of some kind with the Transvaal Boers, led to the conflict at Majuba. Gladstone accepted that British defeat for fear lest the Dutch of Cape Colony should throw in their lot with their blood brothers beyond the Vaal ; and so the Transvaal recovered its independence as the South African Republic.

Mr. Trevelyan does not even mention the annexation of 1877—the cause of the whole trouble—or the failure for four years to redeem the pledges given to the Boers. There was no vacillation. The Government had decided in January to change a wrong course to a right one before Laing's Nek, and their action met with the warm approval of the Conservative leader in the House of Commons. If the change was made from fear of anyone the danger was from the Orange Free State and not the Cape Dutch. Mr. Trevelyan is wrong in his facts and ignores the unfortunate mistakes of Colley. The Govern-

ment were wrong not in proposing terms of settlement but in having failed to make them earlier. The appointment of a commission was essential to any attempt at settlement, whether before or after the Boer rising in December 1880.

Brand's warning in December undoubtedly helped the Government to realise the perils of the situation before Colley took control. Brand gave the information which should have come from responsible British advisers in South Africa. Mr. Gladstone saw the strong case of the Transvaal, and realised that a new policy was essential.

The Government had sent proposals which, on the day of Majuba, were accepted by President Kruger. It is as unjust as it is untrue to say, in the face of these indisputable facts, that Mr. Gladstone "accepted" defeat for fear of the Cape or even the Free State Dutch; or in any sense or form to say that an arrangement was made because of the Majuba defeat. It was made in spite of it in pursuance of a predetermined plan. Kruger accepted the Government terms the day before the catastrophe. The only question after Colley's defeat was this: Ought the Government to cancel the terms they had thought right to offer? They did not do so; they were determined to stand by their own proposals offered to and accepted by Kruger.

I now pass to the question whether the Government ought to have cancelled these proposals.

3. Most of those who in 1899 thought that Mr. Chamberlain and Lord Milner were right in their handling of Transvaal affairs from the Jameson Raid onwards, and supported them in their war policy, hold that the troubles originated in the retrocession of 1881. A different view is held by those who believe that the Jameson

Raid would not have occurred had there not been something in the policy of the Government which encouraged it ; and that even after the raid, with more wisdom and restraint than were shown, the war could have been avoided. In short, one side thinks that retrocession was a surrender after defeat which encouraged Kruger to pursue a definitely anti-British policy and forced on the second Boer War ; the other side holds that retrocession strengthened the whole British position in South Africa as a great act of justice to the Transvaal, and that the Government in 1895 was indirectly responsible for the Jameson Raid and its *sequelae* which led to the war.

Looking at South African history from the time of the Sand River Convention one thing is clear. Government of South Africa from Downing Street was a failure, and it could not be anything else. Canada, with a totally different history save the common problem of two rival European nationalities, fortunately had settled down under the dominion plan of 1867. But South African problems, peculiarly her own, were more complex. Racial competition between Dutch and English—the latter in the minority though dominant ; the evolution of the Boer personality after the Great Trek ; the Cape, the Free State, the Transvaal, and Natal with varying constitutions, industries, aspirations ; the existence all over the South African continent of powerful warlike branches of the Bantus ; the discoveries of gold and diamonds—all created and maintained in full intensity a rankling divergence of views and interests which could not be realised, understood, and properly handled by Downing Street, six thousand miles away.

It is difficult to say that throughout the last half of the nineteenth century the Colonial Office

or any Colonial Secretary achieved any conspicuous success in South African administration leading to sound, stable results, apart from purely native questions and native areas now included in Swaziland, Basutoland, and Bechuanaland. The results indeed were exceedingly "rough-hewn".

All the honest efforts of the Home Government to penetrate the jungle seemed but to create further entanglements. Like its famous "wait-a-bit" thorns, the sharp, tenacious problems of South Africa dealt cruelly with the good intentions and the best efforts of Downing Street statesmen. There were problems, as I have already said, in the east and west provinces of the Cape and of the Cape Colony as a whole; in Griqualand West; in the Orange Free State; in the Transvaal; and in Natal. All these local problems were correlated. Federation having been rejected or at least made impossible, if there was settlement in one quarter it led to contention in another. Then the glitter and glamour of diamonds and gold varied the kaleidoscope and confused the eye. The British rushed to the Reef in tens of thousands. The lust of power to acquire became a definite and pernicious factor in the South African situation. Crude and obvious materialism was woven into obligations of duty, justice, and patriotism. But in the great order of human events the finger of destiny pointed throughout to one conclusion. South Africa must be empowered to face its own difficulties, and must have a free hand in the commonwealth of British nations to work its own way without interference by the Imperial Government.

This view dawned before Majuba, and was held by many in the House of Commons, amongst whom there was one cool, shrewd observer. Campbell-Bannerman did not forget.

Public opinion in those days was very different from what it is now. The League of Nations has widened and organised opposition to war, and brought a new spirit for the peaceful settlement of disputes between nations. Though Transvaal affairs would not be included in the Covenant of the League, had public opinion then been what we know it to be now, it would have compelled a settlement. Or again, when negotiations for a fair settlement opened on January 10, 1881, it would have forced the Colonial Office to take the common-sense measures to stop further fighting pending a decision. As it was, things went all wrong from deficiency of knowledge and wisdom in government departments, and the absence of a spur in public opinion.

In conclusion, let us take things as they were after Majuba. Here was the British Empire with its home population of thirty-five millions opposed to a scattered Boer population of under fifty thousand. We had suffered what were relatively three inconsiderable military reverses. Five days before Majuba we had definitely offered terms which, in fact, had been promptly accepted by Kruger. We were in honour bound to stand by them. To cancel a contract of our own making, wait for heavy reinforcements, and then, in the might of the British Empire, to avenge Colley's mistake on a farming population of under fifty thousand was unthinkable by any right-minded man who knew the facts. The Liberal Government wisely and manfully stood firm. For once in a way their action was approved by the continental press.

It was often said at the time that retrocession earned from the Boers not gratitude but contempt. Soon after the settlement Mr. Bernard Molloy, a well-known Irish Nationalist member,



Photo, Bell Jones Hawarden

VIEW FROM THE WINDOW OF THE TEMPLE OF PEACE

went to the Transvaal on business. When he came back I asked him what the Boers were saying about the Government action. He answered, "I asked a leading Boer a question about Mr. Gladstone. He said, 'At Mr. Gladstone's name we take off our hats'." The Boers knew well the difficulty of making peace after successive reverses. The storm of obloquy against the Government, unflinchingly borne, brought to them the knowledge that at last a majority in the British House of Commons understood Boer aspirations and had done justice. Twenty years later this was a memory of high importance.

Liberal and Conservative action, sometimes right, sometimes wrong, is blended into the history of South Africa. A free and united South Africa has laid the dust of the fierce controversies of the past.

CHAPTER IV

KHARTOUM

“ *Quisque suos patimur Manes* ”—*VIRGIL.*

THE purchase of the Suez Canal shares in 1876 by Lord Beaconsfield's Government has ever since been exploited as a brilliantly conceived investment. Clearly it cannot be justified on that ground only. Speculation is altogether outside the province of sound government. It was a transaction that has to be examined and tested not only by dividends, but by its bearing on the consequences to which it directly led.

The *coup* rests wholly on the responsibility of the Government. It was not submitted to the House of Commons.

As a “ money speculation ” Mr. Gladstone never suggested that it would be a bad one. He opposed it for three reasons.

First, it could not secure the safe use of the Canal in war time.

If the channel of the Suez Canal becomes vital or material to our communication with India, we shall not secure it one bit the better because we have been foolish enough to acquire a certain number of shares in the Canal. We must secure it by the strong hand. We must secure it by the superiority of the naval power. That superiority we could secure whether we are a proprietor in the Canal or not.

True enough, as the Great War showed.

Second, he opposed it on the grounds of larger statesmanship.

We are now to have a separate and what will be called a selfish interest of our own. It seems to me that we run a very great risk in abandoning that community and identity of interest with other great Powers which we have hitherto enjoyed. Nor do I believe that you will be free from invidious—unmerited no doubt—but invidious and inconvenient reproaches and suspicions. I am not by any means sure that you will not give a handle to any Government with which you may happen to be at variance to use against you, as a means of intrigue and opposition, this position which you have I am afraid unwisely chosen to adopt¹

Third, he saw how the first step led to others. Mr. Dicey had already expressed the belief that the occupation of Egypt by England was generally acknowledged to be only a question of time.²

Following him in the same magazine, Mr. Gladstone wrote :

Our first site in Egypt, be it by larceny or by emption, will be the almost certain egg of a North African Empire.

Wide as is British experience in taking territorial responsibilities of varying kinds all over the world, it gave little or no guidance in the Egyptian maze. The Khedive derived his authority from the Sultan, and subject to that weakening connection, Egypt was independent. Interference of any one of the Great Powers was certain to rouse the suspicions, if not the opposition, of others. Annexation was out of the question. If there was to be interference by some method of control, was it to be limited to Egypt proper, or to include the vast inhospitable region of the Soudan? How was Downing Street to come to an agreement with the Sultan and the Great

¹ Speech in the House of Commons, February 21, 1876.

² *Nineteenth Century*, June 1877. Professor Dicey seemed to favour foreign aggression and home repression as part of a spirited policy.

Powers to take responsibility, and in what form, not only for Egypt but according to Egyptian claims for the Soudan as inseparable ?

Mr. Gladstone spoke prophetically, but his warning fell on deaf ears.

Mr. Disraeli treated the whole transaction in the ecstatic spirit of an Oval crowd at the sight of a sensational catch in the deep field. "It is just settled ; you have it, Madam. The French Government has been out-generalled," he wrote to the Queen, who replied, "This is, indeed, a great and important event which when known will, the Queen feels sure, be most popular in the country. The great sum is the only disadvantage."

The Faery [he wrote to Lady Bradford] was most excited about Suez, said, "what she liked most was it was a blow at Bismarck ". . . . She was [he added] in the 10th heaven having received a letter of felicitations from the King of the Belgians on "the greatest event of modern politics".

Finally, the Crown Princess, writing to the Queen from Berlin, tells her :

Willie¹ writes from Cassel, "Dear Mama, I must write you a line because I know you will be so delighted that England has bought the Suez Canal. How jolly." . . . I am sure Mr Disraeli and Lord Derby must be quite delighted at the accomplishment of so important a measure and at its popularity. The wisdom of it is so self-evident that it *can* only be popular.

What exactly was in Mr. Disraeli's mind it is difficult to divine. Let us turn to Mr. Buckle.²

Derby protested, no doubt with perfect sincerity, that nothing was further from his thoughts than the establishment of English authority in Egypt ; that we merely wanted a free passage for ourselves and for the rest of the world, and nothing more. Disraeli's imagination cannot have been so limited, but he used none but vague phrases.

¹ The German Emperor, William II
² *Life of Disraeli*, vol. v. p. 453.

Anyhow, immediately after the conclusion of the bargain, in response, however, no doubt, to a request from the Khedive made before it, the British Government took the first step towards intervention in Egypt by sending a British statesman, Stephen Cave, to inquire into the tangled financial situation of the country. Thence we came, as Mr. Lucien Wolf has well put it, "by successive stages, to the Dual Control, the bombardment of Alexandria, the 'stricken field' of Omdurman, the dramatic crisis of Fashoda, . . . the poetic *dénouement* of the Lansdowne-Cambon Convention".

"We may add", says Mr. Buckle, "finally the establishment of a British Protectorate with a Sultan entirely independent of Turkey on the throne."

Since Mr. Buckle wrote there have been further developments, or rather alterations, in what, at best, was an uneasy position.

As a purely financial transaction the purchase of the Canal shares has proved to be a brilliant success.

Against the enhanced value of the shares, and the fine administrative work accomplished, have to be weighed the sacrifice of life, the heavy cost and constant troubles which have attended British occupation in Egypt from the first. What is the net result? It is an interesting question for the political student.

One thing is clear. Mr. Disraeli made no attempt to consider the probable results of his light-hearted action. To him it was of so little importance that it was unnecessary to get the authority of Parliament. Mr. Gladstone, let it be remembered, seems to have been the only man with a clear vision of consequences.

There is no evidence that Mr. Disraeli bought for the rise. He looked on the control of the Canal as belonging to the chain of fortresses on the road to India. He thought he could steal a march on France. Bismarck also had to be "bridled".

Interference with Egyptian finance followed, because it was feared that otherwise the interest would not be paid. The fateful step of Dual Control was taken because, in the words of Lord Salisbury, there was "no choice but to admit some sort of parity of influence between England and France". So control in a sort of a way was established without executive authority. There was *no direct responsibility*.¹ The fact largely accounts for the errors and calamities which culminated in the death of Gordon. If there had been the full sense of authority and responsibility in the direction of Egyptian affairs, Hicks Pasha and his army would not have been allowed to enter on the ill-fated expedition into Kordofan. When disaster overtook him a remedy would not have been sought by a one-man mission as a sort of forlorn hope.

The heroic death of Gordon when the relieving force was almost in view is and will always be one of the most poignant episodes in history. It is not my purpose either to enter on the long and well-worn narration of events, or to attempt to relieve Mr. Gladstone and his Government from the responsibility which rested upon them for action taken or not taken, and the consequences.

Statesmen must take the rough with the smooth. If they and their followers accept praise and renown for noted achievements they must be equally ready to accept criticism and condemnations for errors. In human affairs, according to the immortal words,

There's a divinity that shapes our ends,
Rough-hew them how we will.

Liberal and Conservative committed grave errors productive of mischief obviously deplorable at the

¹ *Life of Lord Salisbury*, vol. II. p. 356.

time, which, in the complicated sequence of interacting events, led to the solution accepted by all parties.

In Egypt and the Soudan the divinity is still at work. Those who looked forward to the annexation of Egypt have been bitterly disappointed. Those who desired to avoid new burdens are still apprehensive.

In 1876 we plunged into the unknown, without consideration of consequences ; into an adventure which linked us to the Egyptian Government, struggling in corrupt incompetence with vast problems of its own. Other nations saw in Egypt a Serbonian bog, and left us to flounder in it as best we could. We started on an old idea which time and again has influenced British policy—*omne ignotum pro magnifico*.

So far as Egypt itself was concerned the task of straightening out finance and administration, and initiating great engineering triumphs in water conservation was well within our powers. But no one thought of the Soudan until reconquest was decided on by the Egyptian Government in 1883. Catastrophes followed, but still successive British Governments, Conservative and Liberal alike, acted on the supposition of early withdrawal. Over fifty years have passed, but the end is not yet in sight. Have we yet reached a definite objective ? We have restored independence to Egypt subject to perplexing limitations. We hold on to the vast regions of the Soudan, but no person in authority tells us what our policy is to be. Can we give it up ? Ought we to give it up ? Can we hold it, and with what results ?

Are we destined to find in the vast regions of the Soudan that North African Empire suggested by Mr Gladstone over fifty years ago ?

Mr. Gladstone in 1880 succeeded to the Egyptian position created by Lord Beaconsfield. The purchase of the shares had led to the mission of Cave to look into Egyptian finance, and to the establishment of the Dual Control by France and England. It was bequeathed as something existing for a special object and of a purely temporary nature. Mr. Gladstone disliked it from the first and his fears were soon confirmed.

In 1881 the Egyptian army mutinied. Armed interference became necessary. Italy refused to take responsibility and France backed out of hers. England as usual had to bear the full load. The policy of the Dual Control had broken down ; the bombardment of Alexandria (July 1882) and the battle of Tel-el-Kebir followed. Here, at any rate, quick and decisive action for the suppression of anarchy was taken by Mr. Gladstone and his Government.

Then the Government did great and lasting service to Egypt. Baring was appointed as successor to Sir E. Malet. He arrived in Cairo, September 1883.

By this time Hicks Pasha was in the Soudan.¹ Disaster followed, and the Gordon episode was the direct consequence.

Why was the expedition of Hicks Pasha into Kordofan not stopped, as it is perfectly clear now it should have been, by Lord Granville ? Was it so clear at the time ?

Lord Granville was strongly opposed to any intervention which might bring to the British Government responsibility for the impossible position of the Egyptian Government in the Soudan.

¹ Hicks Pasha held the rank of major-general in the Egyptian army. He had been sent to reconquer Kordofan by the Egyptian Government. His army was overwhelmed by the Mahdi, and he was killed in action. This gallant officer was formerly attached to the Bombay Staff Corps

Lord Cromer says that the danger Lord Granville saw was not imaginary.

It might well have happened that almost before the Government were aware of it, they might have found themselves in a situation which would have obliged them to assert their authority by force of arms in the Soudan.

But he adds :

Nevertheless, looking back over the course of events as we now know them, it must be admitted that the line of action which Lord Granville adopted was very unfortunate¹

By the light of events this conclusion is probably right. Neither the Conservative nor the Liberal Government had defined the scope and limits of the Dual Control in Egypt. They seemed to have forgotten the Soudan. That was the fatal blunder.

As things were at the time, what would have been the position if the British Government had forced the Egyptian Government to fall back to the north and be content with holding the territory between the Blue and White Niles ? It was not proposed to give up Khartoum. So rotten was the Egyptian army, it is doubtful whether any part of the Soudan could have been held. If things continued to go wrong, the blame would have been put on the British Government, and the fact that they had directly interfered in Soudanese affairs would have created direct responsibility. Egyptian troops might have been besieged in Khartoum, in which case a demand for the assistance of British troops would have arisen, as it arose when Gordon proved to be in peril.

Lord Granville's decision was probably unfortunate, but there were strong reasons for his action.

So we pass to the disasters which overwhelmed Hicks Pasha—a gallant and determined soldier.

¹ *Modern Egypt*, vol. 1. pp. 365, 366

At once began, as Lord Cromer shows, the suggestion for the employment of British troops to extricate the Egyptian garrisons. So we were face to face with the ominous problem of the Soudan. Cromer considers that he was "largely responsible for initiating the policy of withdrawal from the Soudan". As he rightly says, "On Mr. Gladstone's Government rests the responsibility of approving that policy".

Thus the definite policy of the British Government, as recommended by Baring, was evacuation. Gordon's reports and messages after he left Cairo as regards the situation were vague and contradictory. The main fact is clear. He had accepted without hesitation the instructions of the Government to extricate the beleaguered garrisons and withdraw them. Each successive development of his own actions was in direct contradiction to those instructions.

It is now agreed that the fatal error of Mr. Gladstone's Government was in the selection of Gordon, and for this they alone were responsible.

How did it come about? Wolseley seems to have been the first, as he certainly was the most persistent, advocate of Gordon's capacity for the mission. Apart from that it seems to have been mainly due to a chapter of accidents. The fitness of Gordon was urged because of his earlier exploits in China and the Soudan. Unfortunately, his more recent actions as Commandant of the Cape forces in Basutoland appear not to have been within the knowledge of the four Cabinet Ministers who finally recommended his employment to Mr. Gladstone. Lord Kimberley, who, as Colonial Secretary, possessed full knowledge, expressed his great regret at being absent from the final consultation. Had he been present he thought he would have been able to prevent the decision.

A full account is given by Sir Godfrey Lagden, K.C.M.G., based on the official correspondence between General Gordon and the Cape Government published in 1883. The story throws such clear light on Gordon's impetuosity and idiosyncrasies that I give it here.

The Cape Government, in 1880-81, became involved in a costly war with the Basutos. Peace arrangements with the Paramount Chief, Letsie, and his son Lerothodi, had failed because of the contumacy of their powerful relative, Masupha. At this time General Gordon, on his reputation in China and the Soudan—the precise reasons given subsequently to justify his selection for Khartoum—had been appointed Commandant-General of the Colonial forces at the Cape.

In a most irregular manner he entered into private correspondence with missionaries, strangers to him, about Basutoland affairs, sending through them unauthorised communications to Masupha which had the effect of embarrassing the authorities both in Cape Town and Basutoland. This was followed by a draft convention he recommended the Cape to enter into with Basutoland. It was impracticable and showed ignorance of local conditions¹.

In September 1882 General Gordon went personally to Basutoland.

As might be expected with one whose individuality was so strongly marked, General Gordon quickly broke away from Mr Sauer² and insisted, protests notwithstanding, upon seeing Masupha just at that moment when Mr. Sauer had arranged with Letsie to make such a forcible demonstration against Thaba Bosigo as would positively and finally humble Masupha. His intentions were the purest: his hope, that of averting conflict; but the moment could not have been more ill chosen.

¹ *The Basutos*, Sir G. Lagden, K.C.M.G., vol. ii. pp. 534-5. (Hutchinson and Co., 1909.)

² The well-known Cape statesman, afterwards a colleague of General Botha's in 1910. He died in 1912. An able man, he was specially distinguished by his sympathetic insight into native affairs.

The line taken by General Gordon in his mission to Thaba Bosigo was to play upon Masupha's vanity, exalting him in rank above his fellows and his Magistrates. It was bound to fail. Masupha was cautious in his utterances and talked about the weather and crops. It had the effect not only of disparaging the Governor's Agent and defeating Mr. Sauer's coercive plans but of weakening Letsie's paramountcy and infuriating Lerothodi, who, as heir apparent, viewed with ill-disguised concern the growing ascendancy of his uncle Masupha; it contributed in fact to a rivalry between uncle and nephew that never died down. In a letter of October 17 to Mr. Sauer, the Paramount Chief Letsie stated, "The visit of General Gordon has been far from producing the slightest good—it has only come to greatly increase perversity on part of Masupha and others."

No such quixotic errand should ever have been allowed. A ludicrous *impasse* was followed by a regrettable rupture between the General and Mr. Sauer who found himself obliged to abandon the policy of coercion and, after vainly seeking to influence Masupha by friendly persuasion at a meeting on October 12, 1882, retired from the territory, his mission with Gordon having excited animosities within and shaken the authority of Government from without.

On September 27 Gordon telegraphed to Mr. Scanlan, Prime Minister of the Cape Government:

As I am in completely false position up here and can do more harm than good, I am leaving for Colony, whence I propose coming to Cape Town, when I trust Government will accept my resignation.

On October 16 he wound up his unfortunate intervention with the following letter:

MY DEAR MR. SCANLAN,

I write these few lines to you to state that in my communication to Masupha I did not even attempt to follow the wishes of the Government, nor did I in the least weigh my words with a view to suit the Government. I acted entirely on my own responsibility, and was and am perfectly convinced that what I said was and is now the best thing that could be done; therefore instead of regretting I do not do so I am sorry I have put the Government in a fix, but believe it is only for a moment and that what I said

will ventilate the question and be the best for the Colony. I therefore take the entire responsibility of my action, merely remarking that my appearance on the stage was an act of Government for which they were responsible.

Believe me with many apologies for any rudeness I may have expressed to you or others,

16/10/82

Yours sincerely,
(Signed) C G GORDON

The official record of these extraordinary proceedings was in Lord Kimberley's hands. Why he did not send it to his colleagues when in consultation, why he did not even submit it to the Cabinet which confirmed the decision, I do not know. Had he done so, it is impossible to believe that Gordon would have been sent to Khartoum.

Mr. Lytton Strachey, in his biographical picture of General Gordon,¹ wonders and speculates on the action of the Government in selecting Gordon for the Soudan mission.

The selection appears to me to have been fortuitous and haphazard. The principals were undoubtedly Lord Wolseley, Lord Granville, and Lord Hartington. It is true that Mr. Stead had created to some extent a Gordon atmosphere. But not one of the three was likely to take his views from Mr. Stead. Lord Edmund Fitzmaurice² does not explain how Lord Granville came to his opinion. Mr. Bernard Holland³ is more explicit. Lord Hartington, as War Secretary, had to consider whether leave should be given to General Gordon—then on the active list—to serve in the Congo under the King of the Belgians. He decided against it. But the War Office telegram to Gordon ran, "Secretary of State decides to allow you", etc. A bad office blunder. On

¹ *Eminent Victorians*, p. 256 *et seq.*

² *Life of the Second Earl Granville*, Lord E. Fitzmaurice.

³ *Life of the Duke of Devonshire, 1833-1908*, Bernard Holland, vol. 1. p. 414 *et seq.*

receiving this telegram Gordon came home from Syria to take up the appointment in the Congo. The War Office found itself in an awkward position. Lord Hartington was not the man consciously to allow his judgment to be influenced by the wish to relieve his department of a difficulty. In personal correspondence he may have been struck by what he may have considered Gordon's sound views.

He [Gordon] expressed his disapproval of the whole policy of Lord Beaconsfield's Government with regard to the "Eastern Question" and to Egypt, and said that "a definite arrangement with France with respect to Egypt and Syria, a firm conviction that the Turkish Government is irrevocably bad and past redemption, and that Bulgaria and Greece should be supported, are what is required".¹

At this time Lord Granville had already been consulting Baring about employing Gordon in Egypt. Bernard Holland shows that Gordon's personal position had become a serious difficulty. He had asked leave to resign his commission so that he could redeem his promise to the King of the Belgians and go to the Congo. Writing to Lord Granville on January 8, 1884, Hartington said :

You know that Gordon has accepted employment on the Congo. We on your advice in the autumn told him that we declined to allow him to accept this. He will be privately told that he ought under these circumstances to resign his commission in the army, but, under our admirable regulations he will retire on *nothing*. If he declines to retire we ought to remove him, but this may be awkward. What do you say?

Gordon, however, sent in his resignation, and two days later Hartington wrote to Lord Granville :

I don't know how long it is since Baring expressed an opinion adverse to his employment in the Soudan. Present circumstances might alter his opinion

¹ *Life of the Duke of Devonshire*, Bernard Holland, vol. i. p. 414.

Wolseley had opposed leave being given to Gordon to serve in the Congo. Writing to Hartington he said :

Looking at the fanatic character of the man, and the chance of collision with French adventurers, I think it very doubtful whether permission should be given.¹

Yet he pressed strongly for Gordon's employment in the Soudan. Hartington seems to have yielded to the pressure of these events in proposing to send Gordon to Khartoum rather than from any special sense of his fitness for the mission.

At this stage Baring gave a reluctant consent to the proposed mission. He had twice rejected it. "Would that I had done so a third time," he wrote afterwards.

The four ministers met in conference. Dilke and Northbrook gave consent. It does not appear that they had any special knowledge of Gordon's qualifications.² Cromer says truly that public opinion was calling loudly for General Gordon. It was an opinion thoroughly uninformed. I do not believe it operated at all on Hartington. The unanimous recommendation of his four colleagues, now supported by Baring, received Mr. Gladstone's approval—telegraphed from Hawarden. It seems to have come from a chapter of accidents. In a sense it was the measure of the position. Baring had nothing better to propose. No one had. The die was cast.³

Gordon was offered an escort. He said that if he did not have an army he preferred to go alone. He was definitely sent to withdraw the

¹ *Life of the Duke of Devonshire*, Bernard Holland, vol. i. p. 415.

² See *Modern Egypt*, Earl of Cromer, vol. i. p. 429.

³ Mr. Wickham Steed, in the *Review of Reviews*, March 1928, says: "In order to make a good impression Mr. Gladstone determined to make use of a popular hero, General Charles Gordon, better known as 'Chinese' Gordon." This unwarranted statement is contrary to the facts.

garrisons and make the best terms he could for the evacuation of the interior of the Soudan. As definitely he accepted the Government directions.

“Without the smallest doubt”, says Lord Cromer, “General Gordon expressed in the strongest terms his entire concurrence in that policy.” The italics are mine.

Baring gave Gordon a firman to be used at will, appointing him Governor-General of the Soudan, and in his book explains his reason. I do not go into this. Lord Cromer agrees, however, that the powers he conferred on Gordon altered the character of his mission (p. 447). This the Government had no option but to accept.

Gordon left Cairo on the night of January 26, 1884. “My own heart was heavy within me,” writes Lord Cromer.

Gordon records in his Journal (p. 59) this estimate of himself :

I own to having been very insubordinate to Her Majesty’s Government and its officials, but it is my nature, and I cannot help it I fear I have not even tried to play battledore and shuttlecock with them I know if I was chief I would never employ *myself*, for I am incorrigible. To men like Dilke, who weigh every word, I must be perfect poison.

Gordon remained true to self-knowledge. From peaceful efforts he passed to menace ; from menace to punitive action ; from punitive action to subjugation.

In February 1884 he asked for five British officers to hold together the well-disposed tribes : then proposed to organise Soudanese troops to support a Governor, to be left in the principal towns for administrative purposes after withdrawal. The Government saw no relief in this. One difficulty was to be removed by the creation of another. So there came the startling opinion, “If Egypt is to be quiet the Mahdi must be

smashed up. The Government must assert its authority before evacuation." To bluff the Mahdi Gordon actually announced that British troops were on their way. He asked for Zebehr, because he might have influence in the Soudan. He asked—in his policy of bluff—for two hundred Indian troops to be sent to Berber. This was barred by the military authorities. Everyone had their say in adding to confusion.

In March, with some success, Gordon took the offensive. In April £200,000 and two thousand or three thousand Turkish troops would be enough to do for the Mahdi. A hopeless suggestion.

Then came the message that as Zebehr and help were refused he felt himself " free to act according to circumstances ".

The only practical proposal was the sending of Zebehr. Mr. Gladstone was in favour of it, but the Cabinet was against him.

So Gordon continued his efforts to smash the Mahdi, with whom he announced in August he was " pretty evenly matched ".

Now begins the period of complaints. In March he had expressed gratitude to Her Majesty's Government and Sir E. Baring for having given him every assistance which he could have expected. But in August he asks, " Is it right that I should have been sent to Khartoum with only seven followers and no attention paid me till communications were cut ? "

" No attention ! " If only Gordon had been able to realise the truth, the deep and grave anxiety of the responsible men, their constant effort to interpret his disconnected series of telegrams and messages, to find out the true situation, to discover from his kaleidoscopic proposals some practical ground for action and support. As an alternative to the British reconquest of the Soudan

Gordon had been sent on a mission for peace and withdrawal. What a result ! The Soudan was up in arms. Moslem fanaticism had been roused to fury. The Government was being pressed to send an army to save Gordon, as well as the situation he had been sent to save.

If Gordon had loyally striven to adhere to his definite agreement to pursue the policy of withdrawal ; had his messages shown increasing and insurmountable difficulties in the course of his task ; had he sent clear and intelligent reports to the Government showing his position to be impossible ; then the whole situation would have been different. The Government would have been bound to take immediate and effective action. As it was Gordon threw the Government policy to the winds and substituted his own plan of reconquest. He demanded an army to support his own policy. His reports on his safety, though conflicting, were up to a point reassuring.

While the Government in London, harassed and perplexed, were seeing in the messages of their emissary the wreck of their intentions, Gordon wrote in his Journal his own determinations.¹

I was named for EVACUATION OF SOUDAN (against which I have nothing to say) not to run away from Khartoum and leave the garrisons elsewhere to their fate.

Nov. 19. I declare *positively and once for all that I will not leave the Soudan until every one who wants to go down is given the chance to do so*, unless a government is established which relieves me of the charge, therefore if any emissary or letter comes up here ordering me to come down I WILL NOT OBEY IT, BUT WILL STAY HERE AND FALL WITH THE TOWN AND RUN ALL RISKS.

“ C'est magnifique, mais ce n'est pas la guerre,” observes Lord Cromer.

Wisdom after the event makes everything

¹ I quote from *Modern Egypt*, vol i. p. 564.

clear and certain to those who, having no responsibility, clamoured for a relief force at the first whiff of danger. Yet a decision which certainly involved thousands of lives required much anxious consideration. "We have provisions for five months" was Gordon's message in August.

He knew well that his mission, from the first, was one of great personal danger. Had he fallen a victim to treachery in the earlier months of 1884 it would not have caused surprise. What roused opinion was the long heroic stand at Khartoum against the Mahdi's hordes. Events which led to it were for the time entirely out of sight.

All this is now familiar. I recall it for a definite purpose. The Liberal Government, and Mr. Gladstone in particular, are not only charged with errors of conduct but with failure from a moral insensibility amounting to callousness to understand Gordon's personal position, its terrible isolation and danger. The charge was wrong and ungenerous, but there were, I think, appearances which gave rise to it.

The most convinced defenders of the party system, and I am one of them, admit its serious drawbacks and dangers. In 1884 party animosities were at what Cromer termed "hurricane force". In 1883 the Conservatives had moved votes of censure on the Government for their conduct of Egyptian affairs. Gordon's mission was their opportunity. I make no complaint, for Liberals in their place would perhaps have not acted differently. From the outset the Conservatives backed Gordon. He was a man of action and resource, and, to put it briefly and truly, they backed him against the Government. The complications of Tokar and Sinkat were cleverly worked into the incidents of Gordon's journey to the south. The Government through-

out was at a heavy disadvantage. The Radical section were strongly opposed to everything which seemed likely to involve the Government in new responsibilities and fresh demands for troops. The Parnellites voted systematically on the principle of embarrassing and damaging the Government. The Government had committed itself to Gordon. Every message from Gordon more and more endangered their policy and gave fuel to Opposition fires. They were responsible for Gordon, but not for his new and disastrous action. They were called upon to make themselves responsible for both. Gordon's own suggestions for enforcing his views were hopelessly impossible. If military support had to be given it could only be by an organised expedition in great force.

The prospect of this raised strong feelings among the Liberals, to which was added exasperation against the Opposition for using every fresh message from Gordon as fresh opportunity of attacking the Government.

It would have been far better for the Government had the Opposition been united and steady under a capable leader. Northcote, the most gentle and upright of men, had no alternative policy of his own, and no control over his wild men. It did not matter to Conservatives, eager to destroy the Government, that Gordon's messages were contradictory. They were not responsible for Gordon but the Government were, and Gordon's messages, sent without thought of political parties, more and more served the party tactics of the Opposition. Later, when the position at Khartoum was fully realised, party animosities diminished and there was general and concentrated anxiety for Gordon's safety. The fact, however, that the Conservatives had so far supported not only Gordon but all that he said

and did, while the Liberals were strongly criticising him for his reversal of Government policy, created the impression which never passed, that they failed to do justice to the undaunted man who died at his post.

I quote passages from my diary in February and March of 1884 which show how tangled party feelings were with events in the Soudan.

Feb. 7 Had talk in morning with Father about Egypt —he very firm about non-intervention in the Soudan

Feb. 8 Reported at breakfast to Mr Gladstone the feeling I had noticed in the House on Egypt. Several Radicals, on sentimental and humanitarian grounds, advocated despatch of considerable force to Suakin and strong effort to relieve garrison. Others prefer not to send troops but let the sailors and marines make a dash at Sinkat and Tokar, *e.g.* R. T. Reid [subsequently Lord Loreburn]. Others again, *e.g.* Illingworth, are strong against intervention and would at once resent any operation of war in Soudan by English troops. But I told Father that I thought any disaster to Gordon would be followed by an outburst that could only be allayed by the promptest and most energetic policy in word and deed on part of Government. He assented to this and said I need not be afraid on this score as inaction would be impossible.

Feb. 10 News of Gordon's arrival at Berber after 5 or 6 days in the desert. Matters approach a crisis and some action seems necessary if only to meet public opinion. Yet it all seems unreal . . . But the public seems to confound our obligations in Egypt, which we have declared our intention of performing at all costs, with our Soudan policy which is the withdrawal of Egyptians, non-intervention on our part and the handing over the country to the people. Father said to me at breakfast this morning, "It depends upon Gordon whether I am in office a fortnight hence". And later in the day he said, "I have cut out the cartoon from *Punch* representing me on Gordon's back". He thought it true. For if Gordon fails he believes he must go to satisfy the people. The question now before the Government is whether to ask Gordon if he will have troops sent out in the event of his failing to accomplish his mission. . . . The P.M. meanwhile is wonderfully composed—

evidently engrossed and occupied but brave and ever cheerful in facing the worst . . .

Two days later Mr. Gladstone by a great fighting speech re-established for the time the position of the Government.

Feb 12 Randolph C. traversed the whole speech in a 2 hours' harangue which was clever. The whole tone of the party rose many degrees—clouds cleared like magic. Confidence everywhere restored. The only grumbler were Pender & Co for the bond holders. . . Was congratulated on all sides. Pell, T P O'Connor, Bryce and many others thought it the finest effort under the circs of this Parliament. . . Father told me that he felt the necessity to put in powder at first and to pound in order to carry through the retaliatory part of the speech which the House would not have stood if he had begun quietly and tamely. He was very thankful to have it over. I never saw the Tories so exultant at first and then so silenced against their will.

March 13 Talked on Egypt with him [Mr Gladstone] Still thinks Government wedded to Gordon and that if G. does not alter about Zebehr, Government must acquiesce tho' most unwillingly. I told him I thought there would be a greater uproar over Red Sea littoral going to Turks. He declared he had never been against Turkish power extending over Moslems—he had limited his attack on Turks to their dominating Christian populations. However, he said he should be pleased if there was a solid opinion on the point as it would be then possible to use it in adopting other methods.

At this time the Government was being hammered from all quarters. The Opposition never ceased their frontal and turning attacks, without suggesting an alternative policy. I note on March 15 :

Labouchere's motion declaring the fighting in the Soudan unnecessary supported by Tories and Irish—a plot to catch the Government asleep which was concocted the night before in the smoking room. . . I told St John Brodrick ¹ that

¹ Now Earl Midleton—a very old friend of mine I think now what I said to him then has proved true.

it was the worst vote he would ever give in his life. He said, "Well, I confess it could only have been justified by success". After this hypocritical and shameful device we had twelve hours of Irish obstruction, the debate lasting till 5.45 A.M.

Party currents ran fiercely on both sides, all the more so because a General Election was in the offing. The party system was, in fact, almost if not quite at its worst. Men wished for what was best for the country quite honestly, but in an atmosphere so superheated speeches were largely influenced by party feeling.

When the catastrophe took place it was a crushing blow for the Liberals. The Conservatives for a whole year had defended and approved Gordon's action, and from the earliest days had demanded the despatch of troops. The Liberals had criticised Gordon and had supported the Government in refusing to send troops till convinced of the necessity. Accordingly, from the Conservatives and general public poured a passionate and natural torrent of praise and gratitude to Gordon, accompanied in full measure by denunciations of the Government.

The Liberals were reduced, if not to silence, at any rate to reserve. Praise of Gordon from them was mocked and turned to their reproach. So it seemed from this natural reserve as if they were wanting in appreciation and gratitude to the man who, after fighting for so long against overwhelming odds, had faced the end with steadfast and unfailing dignity and courage.

How could the Liberal Government and their supporters censure the man who had died for his country in a tragic storm of events which struck the imagination and enthusiasm of the world? Defence necessitated criticism which at such a time it was impossible to make. The grim tragedy was set in the whirl of party passions. Rightly

or wrongly Gordon had been sent on his mission. The defence was that he himself created the very position which he was sent to avert. But it may be the Government was wrong and the position was inevitable. In that case Gordon was the man who saw it. If so, he should have warned the Government that while ready to do his best it was out of his power single-handed to succeed in what he knew to be the object of the Government. At first he was full of confidence. Then as developments came he was confident of being able to smash the Mahdi. He found it impossible. The expedition arrived too late. The facts are all known, and there is nothing to be added.

The full fury of condemnation fell on Mr. Gladstone. Lord Cromer's history of Gordon's mission shows how ample were the materials for defence and attack. Rightly and wisely the Prime Minister bowed his head to the storm. He expressed what he thought of Gordon as "a hero of heroes", but otherwise he kept silence, then and afterwards. It was the finest tribute he could pay to glorious action in the shadow of death.

Lord Cromer, in *Modern Egypt*, has given a full, true, and graphic picture of the Egyptian problems and troubles which followed 1876. His criticism is balanced and fair, with the exception, as it seems to me, of one passage.

In a word, the Nile expedition was sanctioned too late, and the reason why it was sanctioned too late was that Mr. Gladstone would not accept simple evidence of a plain fact which was patent to much less powerful intellects than his own.

The evidence was not simple, and there was no plain fact. Military considerations, the differing opinions of the leading generals caused delay. It was made clear that each one of three possible

routes presented almost insuperable difficulties. On the advice of General Stephenson and Sir Andrew Clark, preparations were first made for the Sinkat-Berber route. This was abandoned because of the opposition of other experts¹

Wolseley persistently supported the Nile route, which was finally chosen. It may be said that delay, though undue, gave more time to work out the details of the route.

In all his military undertakings Wolseley looked to safety and certainty. It was a merit. The advantage of employing Canadian boatmen had escaped him, and his insistence on obtaining their services led to delay. Had everything gone according to the calculations which the Government received from Wolseley himself, the expedition would have reached Khartoum in December 1884. Even as things were there was sound reason for believing that the expedition would arrive in time.

However this may be, what does Lord Cromer's statement practically amount to? It is this. The plain fact was visible to everyone except Mr. Gladstone. It was evident, therefore, to Hartington, Granville, Chamberlain, Harcourt, and all Mr. Gladstone's Cabinet colleagues. So, according to Lord Cromer, they all acquiesced in making themselves parties to Mr. Gladstone's refusal to accept "simple evidence of a plain fact".

The facts were that for want of definite information they all had doubts and misgivings. But not one of them, not even Hartington himself, was sufficiently convinced of the necessity for earlier action. Had it been so Hartington must

¹ Every reader of the Official History of the Nile Expedition will realise the complexities in the choice of the best route to Khartoum, and how greatly the acute differences of military and naval authorities added to the difficulties of the Government, and so, indirectly as well as directly, to delay. See Appendix IV.

have resigned. What was his opinion? The Queen entered in her diary on October 2, 1894:

Saw Lord Hartington, and spoke to him of Egypt and General Gordon, who he thinks will come out safely

This evidence shows why Lord Hartington did not resign. It proves conclusively the injustice of Lord Cromer in the passage I have quoted. Mr Gladstone was first in responsibility, but the whole Cabinet shared in it.

It is altogether beyond common fairness to intensify condemnation by statements that he alone was in error when everyone else saw the truth. The fact remains that his colleagues, who in patriotism and capacity were not second to any of their critics, saw reasons which at the time justified them in supporting Mr. Gladstone. It is also true that up to March 1884 the policy of the Government was markedly approved by the House of Commons, and that even after the great catastrophe the Government still held a majority against Conservatives and Nationalists combined.

Finally, when the whole issue, after passions had cooled, was referred to the country the Liberals were returned by a large majority. It was significant but not conclusive, because there were issues other than the question of the Soudan. There was more significance in the majority of 4681 which Midlothian gave to Mr. Gladstone himself.

CHAPTER V

IRELAND

“ It is an undertaking of some degree of delicacy to examine into the cause of publick disorders. If a man happens not to succeed in such an inquiry, he will be thought weak and visionary, if he touches the true grievance, there is a danger that he may come near to persons of weight and consequence, who will rather be exasperated at the discovery of their errors, than thankful for the occasion of correcting them. If he should be obliged to blame the favourites of the people, he will be considered as the tool of power; if he censures those in power, he will be looked on as an instrument of faction. But in all exertions of duty something is to be hazarded.”—BURKE

“ THE speed of his *volte-face* on a subject [Home Rule] of such immense importance bewildered and exasperated the British electorate.”¹

This figure of speech was not conceived in the historical spirit which distinguishes Mr. Trevelyan’s work. In military parlance it means “ right about face”. Yet in truth Mr. Gladstone’s adoption of Home Rule was no more a *volte-face* than his conversion from Protection to Free Trade in the ‘forties. It was not unexpected. The electorate as a whole was not exasperated. Moreover, in the case of Home Rule there was no “conversion”. He was on principle an autonomist, and had been so for forty years.

I read for the History School at Oxford in the ‘seventies; and subsequently lectured on history.

¹ *History of England*, G. Trevelyan, p. 688.

Froude, Lecky, Matthew Arnold, Goldwin Smith, and John Bright brought me to conviction on Irish affairs. Four of my guides lived to be distinguished Unionists. Nevertheless their facts and arguments led me to an opposite conclusion. The trouble with Ireland was not only social and racial. It could not be explained by unjust land laws or the sway of an alien established Church. These were superadded embroilments. The root trouble was English autocracy.

Invasions, massacres, plantations, Protestantism enforced by the sword, destruction of promising manufactures, evictions of rack-rented tenants through centuries had saturated the Irish with intense hatred of the "alien" government. If ever on earth there was a political question it was the government of Ireland from first to last.

Pitt saw the truth and sinned against the light. For at the close of the eighteenth century there was well-founded hope in nationalist Ireland. They had an Irish Parliament, a sovereign body independent of Westminster. True, the Parliament of a Protestant minority, but it was Irish. Repeal of penal laws would make it national.

Lord Fitzwilliam, the Viceroy, strongly urged the emancipation of the Catholics. At the opening of the Irish Parliament in 1795 that question, by the wish of Pitt, was not mentioned. But the significant hope was expressed in the speech that "the united strength and zeal of every description of subjects" would be elicited.¹ The Protestant patriot Grattan appealed for "the union of all the property of the country in support of the laws and of all the talents in support of the property, with measures to redress and unite". There was no doubt, says Lecky, about the popularity of the administration of Lord Fitzwilliam. Pitt saw

¹ *Ireland in the Eighteenth Century*, Lecky, vol. III p. 278.

but ignored the golden moment, and yielded to Dublin Castle and the Beresford entourage¹

Pitt gave in to his difficulties and destroyed the one hope. For Catholic emancipation he substituted the Act of Union ; he placed the British legislative seal on all the existing miseries of Ireland. These were left to rankle and ferment, openly or in secret, in a long succession of conspiracies. Direct British rule was established and maintained in Dublin Castle by sheer physical strength for 120 years.

“Crime dogged the footsteps of the Land League,” it was said correctly enough at a later stage, for crime followed almost every Irish organisation. But in truth disorder, famine, poverty, distress, and crime in plenty dogged the policy and actions of successive British Governments in Ireland through the century.

Irish nationalism was still beyond the pale. In 1863 Mr. Disraeli observed to the Queen that during two centuries the Sovereign had only passed twenty-one days in Ireland. To which the Queen sternly replied : “For health and relaxation no one would go to Ireland, and people only go who have their estates to attend to”.

At the advent of Mr. Gladstone in 1868 as Prime Minister there was hope. His Church and land legislation removed much bitterness for a time. His attitude of conciliation, the recognition, so new, so unexpected from a British statesman, that Ireland had great grievances, arrested attention. The Act of Union had declared the Irish Church Establishment to be an essential and

¹ The Beresfords absorbed Government places and were ardent supporters of the Dublin Castle regime. John Beresford, Lecky relates, was First Commissioner, with an official house and salary of £2000 a year. He also obtained the office of Taster of Wines, with a salary of £1000 a year for his own life and that of his eldest son. Of such was Dublin Castle.

fundamental part of the Act. The Act was, after all, not inviolate. Disestablishment might be the beginning of the end. From that time onward he gained the ear of nationalist Ireland. But there was no settlement.

I apologise for bringing in a matter of such unimportance as my personal views. I have much to say about the working of Mr. Gladstone's mind on Ireland. I wish to show why it was that I, a youngster, was in particularly close touch with him on Irish affairs and why it is that I speak with some authority on the development of his views.

The history of the English in Ireland was a long, consistent tale of violence and injustice. Hate and not trust resulted. The Act of Union destroyed the Irish constitution founded on the solemn pledges of 1782. Both Houses of Parliament by resolution declared that the connection between the two kingdoms should be established upon "a solid and permanent footing". In the formal concessions to Ireland of sovereign power by the repeal of the Statute of 6 George I., in the words of Lecky, "a noble work had been nobly achieved". Eighteen years later the Irish Parliament was ruthlessly swept away by an "orgy" of corruption. A system of government and administration was forced on Ireland which would not have been tolerated by English or Scotsmen for one week.

Dublin Castle was the great rock of offence. So, when I entered the House of Commons in 1880, I supported the Irish demand for an inquiry into Home Rule.

In the nineteenth century there were great statesmen and some progressive governments. Why were the old methods, with constant repetition of bad results, so long maintained?



Photo, F. Smith & Co., Ltd

GARGOYLE ON CHESTER CATHEDRAL THE HUMOUR OF A DEAN

Politicians did not wish to make a mess of things in Ireland ; as human beings their intentions were good and well meant. Nevertheless, with perverted energy and unimaginative arguments they persisted in following the old track. Even when the truth was presented to them in 1886, as Burke says, they were rather exasperated at the discovery of their errors than thankful for the occasion of correcting them.

The plain reason is that, fed on constantly wrong information from Protestant Ulster and landlords generally, selected and edited carefully by the coteries of Dublin Castle, British politicians never looked to fundamentals and failed to see where lay the true source of trouble. They honestly believed in the superlative merits of Downing Street.

As a Junior Lord of the Treasury it so happened that I was attached, in October 1881, to the Irish Office under Mr. Forster and, until his resignation in May 1882, had ample opportunity for watching Dublin Castle at work. The winter of 1881-82 produced a terrible crop of crime. Whenever I ventured the suggestion that the root of the mischief was the constitution and methods of the Irish Government I was, so to speak, knocked on the head as an ignorant youngster. One day in a Galway train I got into talk with a fellow-traveller. He was an Irish land agent. He pooh-poohed my ideas on the disturbed state of the country. "The people want the land. There's only one way of dealing with them." "What's that ?" I asked. "This," he replied, and he pulled out his revolver.

Two wretched old formulæ prevailed in Ireland. "No concession until law and order are restored," and then, when in intervals of exhaustion or hope comparative quiet prevailed,

" firm government ; concession will only lead to further demands ".

Mr. Gladstone paid his first visit to Ireland in 1875. At that time and for some years later he did not realise the nature and significance of Dublin Castle. He had grappled with two grave grievances. He believed that disestablishment and the Land Act of 1870 would remove discontent. The extremely friendly reception he received in 1875 and the quietude that seemed to prevail no doubt confirmed that view. As usual England was not watching Irish affairs so long as things were quiet.

Lord Beaconsfield's haphazard warning in 1880 was justified by events. The greater the truth of it the greater the condemnation of himself. For six years the Conservatives had been in office. Beyond a meagre University Education Act the Government had done nothing for Ireland. In impotence they watched the spread of the Land League and the acclamation of Parnell as the uncrowned Prince or King of Ireland.

Suddenly came the Prime Minister's election manifesto, in the shape of a letter to the Duke of Marlborough, Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland, dated March 8, 1880. "A danger, in its ultimate results scarcely less disastrous than pestilence and famine, and which now engages your Excellency's anxious attention, distracts that country." A lamentable result after six years of "firm" Conservative rule.

That was a position trumpeted by Mr. Disraeli and bequeathed to Mr. Gladstone. It seemed incredible, but the warning was well founded. The public, as well as Mr. Gladstone, had been misled by the slackness of the Conservative Government. When the Liberals came into office the seriousness of the position was soon discovered.

The whole country was found to be in the grip of the Land League. It had been organised for a definite political purpose by its leaders. Its objects were ostensibly agrarian and constitutional. Its real purpose was revolutionary. Political freedom was to be won by the land war in Ireland and organised obstruction in the House of Commons. In these circumstances Mr. Gladstone sent Mr. Forster to Ireland as one of his strongest colleagues. Many Nationalists approved the appointment of a man who was known to be sympathetic, large-hearted, and extremely capable, and it was his failure which led Mr. Gladstone to a personal examination of the form, methods, and nature of the Irish Government colloquially known as Dublin Castle.

Ireland, under the Conservatives, had got entirely out of hand. Mr. Forster sought the usual remedy in a Coercion Act—of the scores of Coercion Acts since the Union perhaps the worst. Mr. Gladstone strongly opposed it in the Cabinet. He held it wrong and impracticable for the Executive to have power in so wide an area to lock up men on suspicion. Events proved his opposition to be absolutely right. He had to give way because even Bright and Chamberlain failed to support him.

Mr. Forster, confident in his own honest intentions, did not realise that he would have to lock up people not on his own knowledge but on the reports of Resident Magistrates, police, landlords, and land agents. Moreover, he had this weakness. His personal kindness and loyalty led to his giving indiscriminating support to his officials. It so happened that the chiefs of the Royal Irish Constabulary and of the Dublin Metropolitan Police who had done much good service were long past their prime. The per-

sonnel of these forces was admirable but a change was badly wanted at the top.

In November I arranged to visit the most disturbed parts in the south and west. I spoke to Colonel Hillier, the chief of the R.I.C., about this, and he promised to help me in getting information. He gave me a letter which I reproduce as a curious illustration of the times.

I used this letter freely. In Cork, Limerick, Kerry, Clare, and Galway I called at the police barracks and stations *en route* and received full information on presenting the letter. It had the same magical effect when at night I met armed police patrols on the road. Everywhere centralisation. Nothing by the people.

There were grave deficiencies in the organisation of the police. *Force majeure* was the only idea in the heads of the principals. A Criminal Investigation Department for practical purposes did not exist. Every conceivable blunder was made in arrests. Under the very eyes of the police the Invincible conspiracy was organised in Dublin and the Phoenix Park tragedy was the direct outcome of the fatal neglect of first principles in police organisation.

I landed at Kingstown on October 13, 1881, the day of Parnell's arrest, and became for some months Mr. Forster's guest. This was my first entry in a diary which I kept :

Oct. 14. Last night we had a small garrison of 8 dragoons and about 15 policemen outside. Demonstrations had been announced in the Park, but it blew a furious gale with heavy rain and no one came. Park quite strewn with trees. Drove down with Oakley Forster and Mr. Forster to Castle Heard him examining sub-Inspectors and Magistrates as to state of the country and determining on arrests Read police reports, etc. Bought a revolver and practised shooting. In evening dined with Jephson, O. F. and



15 Nov. 1881.

to the Officer. Head
of other Constables. Royal
Irish Constabulary.

Any member of the
Force to whom this
document is shown
by Mr. Herbert Gladstone
is directed to afford
him every information
expeditious in their
power.

Herbert G.

Colonel Hillier, head of the R.I.C. Sexton and Quin arrested. Curious experience of Irish Government It is wonderfully centralised, reports from government officials streaming in. Nothing now for it but coercion.

Oct 15. Walked down to Castle Dillon, O'Kelly and O'Brien, Editor of the *United Irishmen*, arrested. Last night's meeting at Rotunda of course full and energetic—but crowd outside quite inconsiderable To-day there was some excitement over Dillon's arrest—crowds collected and were dispersed rudely by police Considerable amount of stone throwing and police roughly used when isolated. Much struck with Forster's nerve and determination.

The aspect of Dublin was to me extraordinary. At night after Parnell's arrest strong police patrols moved about everywhere in a storm of groans. At the top of Castle Hill, just inside the Castle gates, were two field guns in position. At the Castle and in barracks heavy military reserves were held in readiness. The regular troops in Ireland, under Sir Thomas Steel, numbered 25,000 men. All this gave food for thought. A remark I made that Dublin seemed like a city in revolutionary Russia was not received with favour.

My sympathies were naturally with my kind and genial chief, for I knew how repulsive to him were repressive measures. We all hoped for the best. The conditions were as bad as they could be. Armed rising was only prevented by an overwhelming military force. It was known that Mr. Forster's life was menaced. Every day instructions came from the police about the route between the Chief Secretary's Lodge and Dublin Castle. All the staff were armed. We found to our consternation that Mr. Forster himself had bought a large revolver, which he carried in one of his capacious pockets with papers and other things. He was induced to leave it at home. It was a black time. When Parliament met in 1882 there was no real improvement.

Mr. Forster himself narrowly escaped with his life. The Invincibles, knowing that he was to cross by the night mail-boat to Holyhead, literally occupied Westland Row station. The police did not scent danger. The men told off for the deed looked into every carriage. They saw Mrs. Forster and the family party. Mr. Forster fortunately was not there. He had gone to dine, with his secretary Jephson, at Kingstown.

Absolute power to imprison on suspicion, enforced by soldiers and armed police, some 40,000 in all, drove open disorder and disaffection underground. On February 7, 1882, I noted in my diary:

News from Ireland resolves itself into this—rents are being paid generally, outrages have largely decreased, bad crimes, *i.e.* murders or attempts to murder, have increased. In short, the movement [the Land League] is breaking down and desperate men are getting more desperate in attempts to keep up the intimidation. In some parts the disturbance is revolutionary and near an actual outbreak, especially in Clare, Limerick, and E Galway.

March 23. Talk with father about Coercion—he agrees that our party won't stand the renewal of the present Act. He told me what I had never heard, that he had all along been opposed to this kind of Coercion by suspension of Habeas Corpus. He thought the agitation too big, wide and strong for it [coercion] to be successful. It is good against secret societies but not against an open, organised, *almost national* conspiracy like the Land League. He would have altered the law in regard to inciting to break contracts and mischievous speeches and made these offences punishable by summary jurisdiction with severe sentences . . . he declared that he was almost alone in his view in the Cabinet.

March 29 W. E. G[ladstone] much alarmed at Mr. Forster's speech.

April 6 He [Mr. Gladstone] is accepting my view of the Irish situation, *i.e.* that the No Rent (manifesto) has failed and hence that crime is more revolutionary in its character.

On April 22 I had, by request, a long interview with Mr. F. H. O'Donnell, a Parnellite free-

lance, a man of conspicuous clevernesss, with tongue and pen of vitriol. The sum of what he said was this :

The Land Act was succeeding. If amended in the way of arrears of rent it would prove a signal success. Crime was shocking to Parnell.

The Land League wished to withdraw the No Rent Manifesto. It was feared that unless the natural leaders of the people were released the whole country would get out of hand. Parnell and his colleagues were no longer irreconcilable. They would be content with a fair grant of Home Rule. If released, Parnell's influence would be a moderating one. The inference was that the League would now fall in with the Land Act and come to terms with the Government.

When I returned to Downing Street the Cabinet was sitting. I quickly wrote a memorandum and sent it in to Mr. Forster. When the Cabinet ended Mr. Chamberlain came into my room to ask for further particulars. He thought something might be made to come of it. It was a matter of " the greatest delicacy and difficulty ". He was himself going to see O'Shea, who was a friend of Parnell's and was, he thought, more to be trusted than O'Donnell.

April 23. Luncheon with the Forsters. Had a long talk with Mr F. *re* O'Donnell, whom he quite distrusts. He thought there was the greatest possible danger in this kind of negotiation and not much chance of anything coming of it.

April 24. Letter from O'D. in evening to assure me that he was satisfied beyond doubt of the truth of what he had told me on Saturday in regard to the change of front on the part of the Irreconcilables. Showed this letter to Chamberlain. O'Shea had confirmed to him what O'D. said to me. He seemed most keen to make something come of this and indeed I think it highly probable. The fact is that these 30 Parnellites represent $\frac{1}{4}$ of the Irish people :

they have been uniformly repelled by the Government and by the English in general . . . the Government has determined now to deal with arrears by which they justify a great deal the L L has said This being so, what is the use of continuing broadside coercion and of keeping Parnell & Co in prison? A new departure is necessary Let us therefore have it speedily and thoroughly Father has been much interested in what O'D has said and doesn't cast it aside by any means He is more sanguine than Mr F[orster] though of course not so confident as Mr C[hamberlain].

April 26. Redmond opened debate [Irish land question] in a very temperate speech. Father spoke in the same spirit 40 min. against the Bill, admitting a grievance in the case of leases and other points which, however, he would not re-open, and promising to deal early with arrears. . . . Healy rugged but rather kind, and people begin to say what does it all mean? A good deal I hope On the whole the debate passed off as well as could be expected

April 29. Glimpse of Mr Forster, Clifford Lloyd,¹ and father The all-important question of release to be considered in Monday's Cabinet—opinion of Ministers [is] in favour of it, but Mr. Forster rather against it except on understanding of a stiff measure of Coercion.

The *pourparlers* were over and the Kilmainham Treaty (what is in a name?) was imminent. Captain O'Shea was the sole intermediary between the Government and Parnell. On May 1 *The Times* announced that a mysterious person twice interviewed Parnell in Kilmainham prison.

¹ Major Clifford Lloyd was a famous Resident Magistrate in Ireland—a man of great resource and absolutely fearless, who for years carried his life in his hand I knew him well On one occasion (he told me) he had to arrest a popular suspect. He had a handful of R I C with him and found an immense crowd of angry people gathered to prevent the arrest With a thorough knowledge of Irishmen he at once settled the procedure He got a farm float, and on it made fast a chair In this he secured his prisoner, putting on his head an absurd hat, and started away The crowd, forgetting their anger, roared with laughter and hurled chaff at the prisoner, who was removed in safety.

He showed me his own hat Inside was pasted a copy of the Riot Act "I address the crowd, and call on them to disperse Then a great row. I take off my hat and before they know what I am at I have read the Act, and I am all right."

At Mr. Chamberlain's request Mr. Forster himself had given admission to Captain O'Shea.

The same day the Cabinet decided to release the prisoners. On May 2 Mr. Forster resigned and Parnell was released. So began the new departure, which was, in fact, the first step direct to Home Rule.

Mr. Forster's resignation was to me personally a matter of deep regret. As my chief and host he had treated me with the greatest kindness. He was, indeed, a man who won affection from all who knew him. Mr. Gladstone was "quite astonished" at the resignation because the release of Parnell was the logical and inevitable result of the negotiations to which Mr. Forster had been a party, though a doubting one.¹

The truth probably was that Mr. Forster saw in the new departure and in the reversal of his coercion policy an admission that the Act—which was his own—had broken down and that a policy of concession and conciliation—which was not his—was to be substituted. He looked upon this as an implied censure inconsistent with his own high sense of personal dignity.

The tragedy of the Phoenix Park (May 6, 1882) was the outcome of the police weakness to which I have already referred.² That so widespread and deadly an organisation should have been developed without the slightest knowledge of the police is almost incredible. But it was thoroughly characteristic of Dublin Castle. There was known danger for the chief Government officials and particularly for Mr. Burke³—a strong, high-minded man who was thought to have the reins of co-

¹ *Contemporary Review*, September 1888

² Lord Spencer on taking up his post had to deal with serious discontent in the R.I.C., and actual mutiny in the Dublin Metropolitan police force. See Morley's *Life of Gladstone*, vol. III. p. 70.

³ Permanent Under-Secretary.

ercion in his hands. I once asked him whether he carried a revolver. "No", he replied; "if they want to get me they can." With their deficient knowledge the police chiefs, thinking the danger was passed, relaxed vigilance in personal protection. So Mr. Burke fell a victim to his own courage and public spirit, and with him Lord Frederick Cavendish—beloved of all—who died to save his friend.

The breakdown of Mr. Forster's Irish administration turned Mr. Gladstone's mind finally against repressive policy. But it did more. On April 12, 1882, he had written to Mr. Forster :

Until we have serious, responsible bodies to deal with us in Ireland, every plan we frame comes to Irishmen, say what we may, as an English plan. As such it is probably condemned. At best it is a one-sided bargain which binds us, not them. . . . If we say we must postpone the question till the state of the country is more fit for it, I should answer that the least danger is in going forward at once. It is liberty alone which fits men for liberty.

Mr. Gladstone's object was to include a large scheme of local government in his remedial legislation. The Whigs would not agree. Mr. John Bailey, in his *Diary of Lady Frederick Cavendish*, observes :

The Diary furnishes one more picture of life as it was then lived among the great Whig families in their last phase, when they were reluctantly submitting to the dangerous and ultimately destructive leadership of Gladstone.

Mr. Gladstone, in his constant effort to mould all Liberal forces for the purposes of progress, was the sole connecting link between Whigs and Radicals. To use another metaphor, he was the last barrier between the Whigs and the oncoming flood of Radicalism under Mr. Chamberlain. They opposed Mr. Gladstone's Irish policy, broke

the barrier, and, as a party, perished in the flood, fighting for a lost cause. In 1882, and again in 1883-84, they rejected the local government scheme, then the only possible alternative to Home Rule. The Whigs had no proposal of their own to offer. By abandoning Mr. Gladstone they frustrated an Irish settlement. Lack of insight and courage brought a great historic party to an end.

Mr. Trevelyan¹ inclines to the view that it might have been better if Mr. Gladstone had left the last stage of the Irish question (and other imperial matters) to younger men. Things might have developed more naturally. Yet it is difficult to say how younger men could have dealt with the Irish situation by methods more reasonable and broad-based and more likely to satisfy Ireland. This interesting speculation is outside the facts of history. Mr. Trevelyan, however, overlooks the fact that Mr. Gladstone's Irish policy was to advance to Home Rule by stages, which again and yet again the younger men thwarted.

The inability of the Cabinet to deal with Irish local government shot the signal back to danger. "It will spoil the policy," Mr. Gladstone said to us at Hawarden. A great opportunity was lost.

Mr. Gladstone's position on the Home Rule question was clearly stated to Lord Granville early in 1882. "Home Rule has for one of its aims local government—an excellent thing to which I would affix no limits except the supremacy of the Imperial Parliament and the right of all parts of the country to claim whatever might be accorded to Ireland."

On February 12, 1883, I gave an address on Ireland at a public meeting in Leeds in favour of Home Rule. I venture to quote, apologetically,

¹ *History of England*, p. 689.

its conclusion, to make clear my own point of view in my talks with Mr. Gladstone :

The claims of the Irish can be asserted on the grounds of justice and reason , and they cannot be gained by force When the English are fairly alive to the merits of a question when “ their massive sense of wrong ” is aroused, they will concede what is right ungrudgingly But they will not be moved one hair’s-breadth by threats and abuse, which never yet have failed to weaken a good case

It is for England to hold out her hand in friendliness to Ireland The time has passed away in which bayonets were the arguments by which England sought to convince Ireland of her wisdom and beneficence of her rule , and in which the sole oratory of English rulers in Ireland was the jargon of English law. Legislation can do much , but it is not everything As Mr. Matthew Arnold says, “ The Irish must find in us something that in general suits them and attracts them , they must feel an attractive force, drawing and binding them to us in what is called our civilisation ”. If England will now and without losing time make one great and noble effort to solve the Irish difficulty , and if she will make a genuine appeal to Ireland to meet her half-way, that appeal will be listened to by a generous-hearted people. Let us appeal to the reason of Ireland to acknowledge that the United Kingdom must remain inviolate ; let us appeal to her sense of justice to admit that it is the duty of the Government to destroy those fell organisations for crime and murder which are fatal to her people’s prosperity and to the cause of reform ; and let us assure them that if they answer to our appeal that we will deal fairly and generously by them , that we will welcome them as brethren in the society of a great nation , and that in the lasting Union of Irishmen and Englishmen not only in these islands but throughout the world, we will rejoice in “ the knowledge that takes away the sword ”.

The Times summarised my lengthy address in a three-quarter column on February 13. The following passages suffice :

No Government could claim to exist on a constitutional principle which did not rest upon the will and support of the people.

It was not expected by the most ardent of the Irish that a separate Parliament could be given them at present, but meanwhile they pressed for administrative reforms such as a County Government Bill, but still there was no reason why the question of Home Rule should not in relation to Ireland be considered on its merits [although it was not one with which we should soon be called upon to deal]. He admitted there were strong *a priori* arguments for its adoption and he did not see that the establishment of a Parliament in Dublin would endanger the Queen's authority in Ireland. The cry for Home Rule would grow in intensity and become formidable unless a disposition was shown to deal with that question on its merits.

I have sometimes wondered why this early effort was not treated as "a kite" from Hawarden!

Mr. Gibson, in the House of Commons, thundered his condemnation and challenged Lord Hartington—leading the House in the absence of Mr. Gladstone, who was recovering from an illness on the Riviera—to say whether my views were held by the Government. Lord Hartington replied that a junior member of the Government was free to state his own opinions, but that if I was correctly reported in *The Times* he disagreed with mine.

On February 22 Mr. Gladstone wrote to me from Cannes :

From what I hear and have seen, I like the idea of your printing your lecture on Ireland. I think it not at all improbable that Murray would print it without expense to you

He, like Lord Hartington, had only read the curtailed report in *The Times*.

In a talk with me after his return he said, "I am ready to give to Ireland everything which I am prepared to give to Scotland". Scotland had long been in possession of what had been denied to Ireland—her own legal code, her own police, edu-

cation, and much of her own local government. Scotsmen in Scotland administered her affairs, Scottish questions were considered and settled in the House of Commons by free debate of Scottish members who were left to themselves by all other members. No stormy sea separated them from their Parliamentary attendances. Irish Nationalists—almost all poor men—had to leave their families and homes and live in London as best they could during the whole term of the Parliamentary session.¹ It was an intolerable inconvenience. The self-sacrifice of these men, no one of whom could accept office or honours from a British Government, many of whom I knew personally, was a significant reality to which British eyes at the time seemed blind. But for Scottish members it was very different. They could come and go in comfort. Having the substance of Home Rule there was no separatist movement. Scotland, in fact, had so much that she didn't really care for more. If she did she could have got what she wanted. That Mr. Gladstone's mind should have travelled on to this point was notable.

Mr. Gladstone's next effort was in 1884, and is described by Lord Morley.² Events had moved on. What was possible in 1882–83 was now out of date. He strongly supported Mr. Chamberlain's plan for establishing a central board in Ireland. Parnell was prepared to accept the scheme. The Whigs, with the exception of Lord Granville, who had always favoured the grant of local government to Ireland, rejected it. As the Cabinet broke up (May 9) the Prime Minister said to a colleague, “Ah, they will rue this day”; and to another, “Within six years, if it please God to spare their lives, they will be repenting in

¹ Payment of members did not come till 1911.

² *Life of Gladstone*, vol. iii. pp. 192–4.

sackcloth and ashes". Had the Whigs been true to Liberal principles the evolution of Home Rule would have proceeded on safe and sound lines. As it was, they sat stolidly on the safety-valve, and another golden moment passed.

On December 14, 1884, is this retrospective entry :

I said to him [Mr Gladstone]. "Don't you think that we must now go forward and give Parnell what he wants? that it is useless to give him what he doesn't want, *i.e.* a County Government Bill, or what he doesn't care for, *i.e.* a Central Board, and that if we concede anything we must give them a Parliament?" He said, "I think we must" His views of late are expressed in his letters to me, and in mine to Labouchere.

Moderate counsels having been again shelved, Irish demands stiffened proportionately. Mr. Chamberlain pressed his unauthorised programme with the Central Board remedy for Ireland. On August 8, 1884, Lord Hartington wrote to Lord Granville, "He [Mr. Gladstone] seems to consider the Central Board plan the minimum which might have sufficed; but that as that plan appears to have collapsed, *a separate Legislature in some form or other will have to be considered*".¹

This state of mind he thought "extremely alarming". Mr. Gladstone, in fact, had arrived at the last stage. Hartington knew it.

But at this time, while Lord Spencer² continued to work gallantly and successfully to uproot the Invincibles and to restore order, there were keen activities in the other camp. Lord Randolph Churchill was striving to secure for the Conservatives the Irish vote at the coming election in September. This movement continued in full blast after the formation of Lord

¹ Fitzmaurice's *Life of Lord Granville*, ii. p. 461.

² Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland.

Salisbury's Government in June 1885. The Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland, Lord Carnarvon, announced the opinion of himself and his colleagues. "My Lords, I do not believe that with honesty and single-mindedness of purpose on the one side and with the willingness of the Irish people on the other, it is hopeless to look for some satisfactory solution of this terrible question."

Before the close of the session Mr. Gladstone saw clearly that the Conservative approach to Parnell and the Irish must raise the scale of their demands. Testing his idea of a separate legislature by the new situation, he believed that it would have to take the form of the Austro-Hungarian or Canadian model or of the repeal of the Act of Union.¹

In the field of Irish autonomy Conservative competition was active and in exasperating contrast to the dull inertness of the Whigs. Lord Salisbury, at Newport on October 7, 1885, said that "their first principle was to extend to Ireland as far as they could all the institutions of this country". The Conservative leader was ahead of the Whigs. He pointed to the danger which besets local bodies. "In a larger central authority the wisdom of several parts of the country will correct the folly and mistakes of one."

It is well at this point to remember the "*volte-face*" charge against Mr. Gladstone.

Parnell, having brought some Conservative leaders to the verge of Home Rule, to a policy more advanced than that which had been rejected by the Whigs, then issued his manifesto. It was a fatal blunder, which destroys his claim to the higher statesmanship. Had he limited himself to acceptance of Conservative concessions he would

¹ Morley's *Life of Gladstone*, vol. iii. p. 215.

not have compromised the future. But the manifesto was an offensive, provocative, and unqualified philippic against the Liberal party. Violent personal attacks by Nationalist speakers in the constituencies followed. Exasperated Liberals retaliated in kind and committed themselves against Parnell and Home Rule.

At the General Election of November 23, 1885, the Liberals won 333 seats, the Tories 251. The Irish Nationalists swept the greater part of Ireland and were 86 strong. Even in Ulster they got a bare majority. Then came Mr. Gladstone's suggestion, through Mr. Balfour, that the Conservatives themselves should deal with the Irish question with Liberal support. It was rejected. Consequently no option was left.

He had to face one great disadvantage. For two years Irish autonomy, that is to say Home Rule, had been discussed in the Liberal Cabinet. No Government declaration had been made, and people had to draw conclusions from individual and rather conflicting speeches. Circumstances had barred from the general public authoritative knowledge of what had happened. The electorate was in ignorance of the evolution of Home Rule due to the refusal of the Whigs to accept the Irish local government schemes in 1882 and 1884. It was a Cabinet affair and kept confidential. The personal negotiations of Carnarvon, Churchill, and Winn, the Conservative Chief Whip, with the Nationalists were carried on in secrecy. In fact, rumours of these negotiations were publicly denied. The electorate did not know how far Whig timidity and secret Conservative advance had forced the pace. This is the truth which again Mr. George Trevelyan has missed. The want of knowledge was made more unfortunate because Mr. Gladstone refused—and

for very good reason—to compete with the Conservatives in seeking Parnell's support at the General Election.

Yet the electorate had general knowledge. While Mr. Gladstone abstained from any declaration which might seem to be a bid against the Conservatives for Nationalist support, any reasonably acute politician could have seen what was clearly in his mind. In his address to his constituents he declared that the wants of Ireland as distinct from her grievances had to be considered. In respect to the powers of local government she was greatly in arrears of England and Scotland. The clear limits here to her desires were the supremacy of the Crown, the unity of the Empire, and the authority of Parliament necessary for the conservation of that unity. He followed up his address by asserting that Ireland had a claim to a special interpretation of the principles of local government. The problem would test the political genius of the nation. Woe be to the man who should prevent or retard the consummation. It would probably throw into the shade other questions. It went down to "*the very roots and foundations of our whole civil and political constitution*".

I have already pointed out (p. 282) that Lord Hartington himself knew on August 8 that Mr. Gladstone was considering a separate legislature for Ireland. Later on he said in public that to him this action had not been a matter of surprise.

The Liberals fought the election under great disadvantages. In a situation such as existed in the summer of 1885, with a Government weakened by five years of stormy, and in two cases disastrous, events; with a battle royal between Whigs and Radicals; with the Irish question surging up

everywhere ; with the Irish vote in the market ; much depended on the Chief Whip.

Lord Richard Grosvenor was an able and an honourable man, of great shrewdness and knowledge of affairs, who had done much in five most difficult years to keep the party together. He had given notice of retirement after the General Election. He was a Whig and in strong opposition to the Parnellites and Home Rule. Consequently, at the most critical time he was not in a position to render the service which is expected from a Whip in full activity with his heart in the job. In, I think, September 1885, Mr. Gladstone summoned me to the Temple of Peace. He told me that Grosvenor had nominated me as his successor. Chamberlain and Dilke had approved.

I was much taken aback and asked for time. Then Sir William Harcourt intervened, and most wisely pointed out that my relationship would check the party's freedom of speech and access. So the proposal fell through. Arnold Morley was subsequently appointed. But Grosvenor held on till the defeat of Lord Salisbury's Government on "three acres and a cow" on January 27, 1886. Before that date and for some months Grosvenor's action was definitely influenced by his antipathy to Home Rule and his close association with the Whigs.¹

I was, and for some time had been, much concerned by the danger of the party position. No attempt had been made to counteract the activities behind the scenes of Lord R. Churchill and his friends. It was known that efforts were being made to secure the Irish vote for the Tories. Parnell himself was anxious to be in touch with the Liberals. He wanted to see who would give him most. The only bid came from the Tories, and

¹ See Thorold's *Life of Henry Labouchere*, p. 287.

there was no one to counteract them. Then Mr. Chamberlain's position was dubious. If Home Rule was declared to be outside practical politics or postponed Mr. Gladstone would retire. If he retired it was certain that Mr. Chamberlain would lead the party, let the Whigs take what line they liked.

Mr. Gladstone had to depend for his information on two or three colleagues who came to Hawarden. The situation demanded active services from an efficient Chief Whip for the purposes of party unity, and of giving the necessary information to the press. It was most unfortunate, and particularly so with regard to Lord Hartington and Mr. Chamberlain, that because of his personal views Lord R. Grosvenor was not in a position to take the action required.

All these matters, which were of vital importance, ought to have absorbed the constant attention of the Chief Whip. Henry Labouchere, in active relation with Parnell and Chamberlain, wrote me scores of letters, before and after Parnell's manifesto, pointing out the difficulties and dangers of the position. Parnell could be won if only Mr. Gladstone would make a statement. As the election approached the pressure intensified to induce him to say something definite on Irish policy in his election address.

As a youngster and a keen Home Ruler I spoke to him often, using all the obvious arguments and such others as I could think of. But he was adamant. Whatever the subsequent dangers, he refused to say anything which would have even the appearance of a bid for the Irish vote. I could make no impression on him whatever. We were completely out-maneuvred and Parnell ran his knife into us. But for that unfortunate manifesto the Liberal majority would have been largely

increased, and the second reading of the Home Rule Bill would undoubtedly have been carried in 1886. Now these matters are important. Mr. Gladstone has been, and still is, accused of adopting Home Rule to secure the Irish vote. In August and September of 1885 could I have got from him any assurance about Home Rule which I could have transmitted to Parnell, the undivided Nationalist support would have been assuredly gained for the Liberals. He refused. Ireland must make a free choice at the election. To bid for Irish support was inconsistent with honour and duty. If the election proved that Ireland as a whole demanded autonomy then would be the time for action. Historians will judge whether he was supersensitive. At least his position was square and honest. How it contrasted with the position of the Conservatives I shall show later.

The Whigs, having rejected Mr. Gladstone's local government policy in 1882 and the Central Board plan in 1884, found in 1885 that their own action had brought them face to face with the only alternative that remained—a Parliament in Dublin. They had no proposals of their own. Lord Salisbury himself had declared for what they themselves had rejected. Rudderless, the Whig boat drifted to the rocks.

THE FIRST HOME RULE GOVERNMENT

The seven-month administration¹ of Lord Salisbury is an important link between the preceding efforts of Mr. Gladstone to secure the support of the Whigs for some form of Irish autonomy and the subsequent adoption of the Home Rule policy.

¹ Lord Salisbury took office in June 1885 after the defeat of the Government, nominally on the Budget, in reality on Home Rule

In Part III. of this book I have to deal with it in detail in connection with Volume III. of the Queen's Letters. To avoid repetition I limit myself here to two observations. Lord Salisbury's honest efforts to find in a *via media* a solution of the Irish difficulty through communication with Mr. Parnell, negative the charges against Mr. Gladstone of adopting a foolish and iniquitous policy. Secondly, Mr. Gladstone's correspondence with Mr. Balfour¹ proves his desire to settle the question of Irish autonomy by agreement. I pass to the first Home Rule Government. The position was this. Though Mr. Gladstone's own views were generally known, he had refused to indicate any plan before Lord Salisbury came to an issue with Parnell on the Irish question. When on January 26, 1886, the Conservative Government reverted to coercion, Mr. Gladstone accepted the challenge, overthrew the Government, and accepted office. The formula on which he constructed his Cabinet was "examination of the Home Rule proposition". On this Chamberlain and Trevelyan joined the Government. When examination developed into a scheme on March 26 the two ministers resigned and Home Rule became the declared policy of the Liberal party.

Mr. Gladstone offered the Woolsack to Sir Henry James, who asked me to see him. We met at Brooks's. He told me that he thought Home Rule was inevitable, and that Mr. Gladstone's policy was right. He believed that Hartington thought so too, though his speeches made it impossible for him to come in. For himself, he had been bitterly attacked by the Nationalists at the election and had answered back in words which he could not repudiate. He would consult his

¹ See p. 396.

chairman. His chairman held him to his words. He wrote to me asking me to convey his answer to Mr. Gladstone. He had not the heart to write himself. As it was with Sir Henry James so it was with numbers of less notable men. The second reading of the Government of Ireland Bill was lost only by 36.

Parnell made his second great mistake in insisting that the debate on the Government of Ireland Bill should go to an immediate issue. When Mr. Bright joined Mr. Chamberlain in opposition to the Bill we knew the result would be doubtful. Public opinion in the constituencies was not sufficiently formed to put pressure on members who were in doubt. Time was wanted. Marvellous as was Parnell's leadership of the Nationalists, he was cynically aloof from the Liberal party and took no trouble to probe and weigh its difficulties. His mistakes were fatal to the Bill of 1886, and, five years later, to Mr. Gladstone's final Home Rule efforts.

Looking back to those times on one matter I have regrets. Mr. Chamberlain wished to take the Chief Secretaryship in 1882. Admirable in every way as were the equipments of Lord Frederick Cavendish, Mr. Chamberlain seems to me to have been the essential man for the post. He had strong and right views on Dublin Castle, and the absence of the most elementary forms of free government in Ireland. With his quick, keen insight he would have formulated a strong policy on the lines of the new departure which the Whigs in the Cabinet would not have been able to reject. Further, Mr. Chamberlain was an adept in political propaganda and he would most certainly have seen the necessity of preparing British opinion for concessions to Ireland. Mr. Gladstone fully recognised his great abilities but

perhaps did not see how closely associated he was with the electorate. Later, he had not perhaps realised that the electorate, greatly strengthened by the County Franchise Act, were untrained in Irish affairs, and consequently that no effective pressure was to be expected from the constituencies, while on the other hand much was needed to stimulate their sympathies and support. Everything depended on the individual views of members. If he had taken Mr. Chamberlain, with his quick appreciation of what people were thinking about, more closely into counsel from 1882 events probably would have been different. As it was, Mr. Gladstone's consultations on Ireland were almost limited to Lord Granville and the Whig section of the Cabinet.

In 1886 it was frequently said that his Home Rule policy was due to advanced age and to diminished powers. His meritorious work was in the past, but the surrender to Parnell was "the action of an old man in a hurry". Subsequent events have changed or greatly modified this view. The main argument to square the policy of 1921 with opposition to a milder form of Home Rule in 1886 and 1893 is that Mr. Gladstone made his Bills impossible because they did not solve the Ulster question. Whose fault was that? Ulstermen absolutely refused to consider separate treatment. They stood by the "loyal minority" scattered throughout Ireland. They fought the whole Bill on its main issue, adopting Randolph Churchill's slogan that sooner than accept it "Ulster will fight and Ulster will be right".

Parnell was against separate treatment, but if Ulster had accepted it Parnell would assuredly not have wrecked the Bill on that account.

Undoubtedly Ulster defeated the second read-

ing in 1886, and, maintaining the same obdurate position in 1893, Mr. Gladstone had no chance of coming to terms. In 1921-22, forgetting the loyal minority in the rest of Ireland by whom, in 1886, she pledged herself to stand, Ulster accepted Dominion Home Rule on the condition of separate treatment for herself. Dublin Castle had relied to the end on force, and had been beaten at its own game. Over these last three years it is best to draw the veil.

The collapse of force led to the recognition of truth.

Those of us—a mere handful now—who, fifty years ago, were working for Home Rule, look upon the closing chapter with mixed feelings. There is no statue to Mr. Gladstone in Ireland. We hoped and believed that on the grounds of justice and public policy England would make atonement for the past by free, open-handed concession, which would be received in the spirit in which it was given. Ulster blocked the way till her staunch ally, Dublin Castle, threw up the sponge in 1921.

It was a finale desired, expected, inevitable, but guns were echoing in Ireland and trumpets were not blown. I recall the words of Mr. Gladstone, April 13, 1886, in the House of Commons, on Home Rule:¹ “ If it be a just and reasonable demand, we cannot hasten too soon to meet it, and we will not wait until the day of disaster, the day of difficulty, and I will add the day of dishonour, to yield, as we have so often yielded, to necessity that which we were unwilling to yield to justice ”.

Whether Ireland at some future time will appreciate the ten years of effort which he gave to Home Rule I know not. My satisfaction is that every argument he used has been proved true and irrefutable.

¹ Introduction of the Government of Ireland Bill.

In 1883 I summed up the results of English domination in Ireland thus :

We have inflicted upon Ireland almost all the wrongs which it is possible for a powerful country to inflict upon a weak one. We prevented the amalgamation of the different tribes, we established hostile colonies, by open violence and legal fraud we endeavoured to root out the natives, of whatever descent they were, from the soil, we monopolised the Government, we ruined the national industries, we gave the people martial law, we maintained an alien Church, and we kept the people from a fair share of the produce of the land.

On December 6, 1921, Lord Birkenhead at Birmingham explained the welcome but dramatic change in the policy of the Coalition Government:

We have all along made one error in our treatment of Ireland. We have paid far too much attention to those things which are merely material, and we have paid too little attention to those things which are idealistic and sentimental.

Wise and understanding words. The paraphrase at once occurs: "We have left undone those things which we ought to have done, and we have done those things which we ought not to have done".

The political chapter is, as we trust, closed. But let us look back for a moment with Lord Birkenhead on what he described as "the fundamentals of this ancient controversy".

He turns to Elizabeth, the proud and aristocratic representative of the Tudor dynasty; and to Ireland, where Lord Essex, with the forces of the Crown, was carrying on "*the same course of subjugation to which we were committed only a few months ago*"—that is to say under Mr. Lloyd George and the Coalition Government.

He describes how in due course, and after

partial subjugation, came the efforts at plantation. Englishmen and Scotsmen were settled in Ulster areas cleared of their Irish inhabitants. "*But observe the unfortunate commitments to which we all of us have been reduced by that policy.*" We were given "a section of the population to which we have special obligations". Consequently arose the "bewildering" Ulster problem, itself, like all the main troubles in Ireland, the creation of British policy.

Then follows Cromwell, who, not being thorough enough in his military policy of thorough, did not exterminate the enemy. So survived "one of the great implacable resentments of history".

Mr. Gladstone, visionary, sentimental, hurried by ambition in his old age, after all was not wrong. Because Lord Birkenshaw in memorable words tells us that in 1921 the chosen men of Ireland—Catholics and Sinn Feiners, be it remembered—and of the British Cabinet "have set their hands to a great instrument of history and said, 'Here lies the truth, here lies right; never, never can the old quarrel be the same'".

The Home Rule mantle enveloped the Conservative party.

CHAPTER VI

“CHARLES STEWART PARNELL,” BY MRS. O’SHEA

MRS. O’SHEA’s work, undoubtedly, will always be read by students of the times. As a story of passionate love and devotion it bears the impress of truth. This I do not question.

In the course of her narrative Mrs. O’Shea, with great virulence, attacks Mr. Gladstone. The book was published in 1914. My brother Henry and I consulted Lord Morley on the desirability of immediate refutation. Everyone was engrossed in the war and we decided that at the time it was out of the question.

Since then Mrs. O’Shea’s allegations have been frequently quoted and beyond doubt will be quoted again. As I am in full possession of the facts of the case it is desirable to place them on record.

Mrs. O’Shea was a clever woman who wrote with skill. She detested politics, and in her communications with Mr. Gladstone acted under the direction of Parnell. She gives her account of what happened between May 1882 and the divorce case which opened in 1890. The book was not published till after the lapse of twenty-four years.

The political consequences of the divorce case created in Mrs. O’Shea’s mind a bitter and life-long animosity against Mr. Gladstone. This is

clearly manifest in her book, her occasional tributes to Mr. Gladstone being skilfully designed to give point to her accusations. With these I deal subsequently.

I must first dispose of a fiction still current. Mrs. O'Shea had nothing to do, directly or indirectly, with the release of Parnell on May 2, 1882. The sole intermediary was Captain O'Shea. The first interview with Mr. Gladstone was on June 1 at Thomas's Hotel, Berkeley Square.

It is necessary to bear in mind that her communications were limited to the times of tension between Liberals and Nationalists. In those times Mr. Gladstone refused to see Parnell in secrecy—in an empty house or at some rendezvous. Parnell, being afraid of Nationalist misconception, refused to see Mr. Gladstone in public—that is to say, in his room at the House of Commons or at Downing Street in the ordinary official way.

At two periods it was essential that Mr. Gladstone should be in direct touch with Parnell. The first was after the Phoenix Park murders in 1882. The second was towards the close of 1885 and during the early part of 1886. Home Rule was then in the making. It was not until February 26, 1886, that the first meeting took place between them. After that date meetings were constant.

The following table shows the position clearly:

| | Mr. G.'s Interviews with Mrs. O'Shea. | Mr. G.'s Letters to Mrs. O'Shea. |
|------|------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1882 | . | 3 |
| 1883 | . | .. |
| 1884 | . | |
| 1885 | . | 8 |
| 1886 | . | 7 |
| 1887 | | 1 |
| 1888 | .. | 1 |
| | — | — |
| | <u>3</u> | <u>25</u> |

The twenty-five letters in seven years related to messages and memoranda sent by Parnell about Irish affairs long since on the scrap-heap.

There were three or four exceptions. Mrs. O'Shea in 1882 twice urged Mr. Gladstone to make her husband Under-Secretary in succession to Mr. Burke. The two letters in 1887-88 begged for Mr. Gladstone's assistance in securing the services of Sir C. Russell¹ and Sir Andrew Clark² in a family trouble.

It will be seen from the above table that the communications with Parnell through Mrs. O'Shea were practically limited to the two periods I have named. In the four intermediate years he wrote on business but once, and out of civility in answer to Mrs. O'Shea on three other occasions.

Those who read Mrs. O'Shea's book will notice that the impression she wishes to make on her readers is that she was in constant activity more or less throughout "ten" years, during which Mr. Gladstone was making use of her and at one time sending "frantic appeals". The facts of the case show that the "ten" years must in any case be reduced to the period from May 1882 to February 1886. In this period two years, 1883 and 1884, were practically blank years.

Mrs. O'Shea herself wrote many letters to Mr. Gladstone and some to the Chief Whip, Lord Richard Grosvenor. Of those written to Mr. Gladstone some he did not answer and others he sent on to Lord Richard. Both as regards interviews and letters Mrs. O'Shea throughout says or suggests that he took the initiative. That was quite untrue. The initiative was taken by Mrs. O'Shea. The whole of Mrs. O'Shea's letters to

¹ Subsequently Lord Russell of Killowen.

² The famous physician.

Mr. Gladstone and Lord R. Grosvenor are in our possession.

To enhance the value and intensity of her own services, Mrs. O'Shea produces some curious stories.

On April 8th, 1886, the evening of the introduction of the Home Rule Bill, Mr. Gladstone sent his private secretary down to Eltham with a letter to me asking me to telegraph one word "Yes" if he was to introduce the Bill that night.

If Mrs. O'Shea had received a letter of that kind she would of course have produced it. The story is a sheer invention. From my personal knowledge I can say definitely that no private secretary ever went to Eltham on any occasion. Eight days' notice of the introduction of the Bill had been given by Sir William Harcourt. Members had flocked to London for April 8 in such numbers that for the first time in history chairs occupied the floor of the House. Postponement would have meant not only general inconvenience but consternation and disaster. The statement, on the face of it, is impossible. It arises either from hallucination or deliberate invention. "Grotesquely false," as Lord Morley wrote to me.

There is another long and weird story of Mr. Gladstone's messenger hunting for Mrs. O'Shea from Eltham to Hastings. It is only fair to say that, in this case, Mrs. O'Shea may have been under a genuine misconception. Strained as were public relations between Liberals and Nationalists, in 1882 and at other times the Nationalists frequently supported the Government. It followed that the Chief Whip wished at times to know their attitude. Parnell kept his movements absolutely secret from his own followers, who could not give the necessary information. It is quite possible

that Lord Richard Grosvenor, in such cases, in pursuit of Parnell, sent his own messenger, who eventually became, in Mrs. O'Shea's imaginative memory, Mr. Gladstone's special messenger.

There are other ridiculous statements of alleged facts which are in the records of the High Court.¹

Mrs. O'Shea's psychological description of Mr. Gladstone and her account of his receptions of her are so remarkable that they require notice in detail.

Gladstone would not sit still when he talked to me, but liked to pace up and down the long room with me. On my entry he would rise from his desk to greet me and, solemnly handing me a chair, would walk down the room to the door at the end, which was always open when I entered, close it firmly and, pacing back to the door of my entry, push it. These preparations always made me smile—a smile in which he joined as, coming up to me and offering me his arm : “ Do you mind walking up and down the room, I talk better so.” So we paced up and down while I voiced Parnell's instructions and listened to the G.O.M.'s views, intentions, and tentative suggestions, always on my part keeping to “ It is considered that, etc., ” in giving Parnell's point, and always receiving “ Your friend should, etc., ” or “ I am prepared to concede to your friend, etc., ” in return.

He was so careful in this regard that one day I said . “ What is it you shut up in that room, Mr Gladstone, when I come to see you ? ”

“ Persons, or a person, you do not come to see, Mrs. O'Shea. Only a secretary or so, and occasionally, in these times of foolish panic, detectives. No,” in answer to my look of inquiry, “ no one can overhear a word we say when we pace up and down like this, and, as you do not mind it, it refreshes me.”

Always as I stood face to face with this Grand Old Man on leaving, and looked into his slate-coloured eyes, so like those of an eagle, I experienced a sudden uneasy feeling, in spite of his gracious courtesy, of how like to a beautiful bird of prey this old man was : with the piercing, cruel eyes

¹ See evidence of Lord Gladstone. *Wright v. Gladstone*, February 1927.

belying the tender, courteous smile, and how, relentless as an eagle, men like this had struck and torn their victims¹

In this remarkable passage not one single line is free from untruth or inaccuracy.

“On my entry he would rise.” “These preparations always made me smile.” “He was so careful in this regard that one day I said.” “Always as I stood face to face with this Grand Old Man.”

A reader may well suppose that there must have been many of such interviews at Downing Street.

Altogether there were three interviews, all in 1882; the first, as I have said, at Thomas’s Hotel in Berkeley Square on June 1; the second and third on August 29 and September 14 at Downing Street. “Always” therefore refers to two interviews.

The “long” room in which the interviews took place has much historical interest. No. 10 Downing Street itself, as many people know, was given to Baron Bothman, the Hanoverian Minister, by George I. for life. George II. offered it as a gift to Sir Robert Walpole, who refused it. He begged that it might be attached to the official First Lord of the Treasury, and this was done.

The so-called “long” room, 28' 3" x 19' 3", is above the Cabinet room and overlooks St. James’s Park and the Horse Guards Parade. Here Horace Walpole wrote many of his letters. It was the study of all the Prime Ministers who used No. 10 Downing Street as their official residence.

The photograph facing this page was taken at a later date, but it sufficiently shows the geography of the room and the “door” referred to by Mrs. O’Shea.

¹ *Life of Parnell*, vol. i. pp. 274-5.



THE PRIME MINISTER'S ROOM, 10 DOWNING STREET

Length, 28 ft 3 in, Breadth, 10 ft. 3 in

"Do you mind walking up and down the room; I talk better so." As a matter of fact Mr. Gladstone never even stood when engaged in interviews. Not one of us ever saw him walking up and down a room in discussion. The solitary exception is recorded by Mr. Gardiner.¹ Mr. Childers, Chancellor of the Exchequer, had withdrawn from a Cabinet meeting in 1885 and threatened his resignation.

Sir William Harcourt and Mr. Gladstone followed him to his room in the Treasury. The Harcourt Journal describes how he walked up and down between his colleagues and at length promised to reconsider his position.

The idea of his walking up and down a room arm in arm with a lady while discussing politics, to anyone who knew Mr. Gladstone is ridiculous. Moreover the position of the furniture made it impossible. The room, itself of moderate dimensions, was occupied by the furniture to such an extent that the only method of progress was to walk round and round the table in the centre.

Mrs. O'Shea would of course have been ushered in from the lobby by one of the messengers on hall duty, and the messenger and not Mr. Gladstone would have closed the door. But then Mr. Gladstone walked down to the door at the end "which was always open when I entered, and closed it firmly". This door consisted of two sets of large double doors, so that the operation of closing was not simple.

"One day I said, 'What is it you shut up in that room when I come to see you?' The answer was: 'Only a secretary or so and occasionally, in these times of foolish panic, detectives.'"

If these doors were open anyone could see

¹ Gardiner's *Life of Harcourt*, p. 526.

who was in the adjoining room. It was in fact Mrs. Gladstone's sitting - room. No secretaries went there except occasionally to see her. Neither policemen nor detectives in any circumstances or at any time were on duty in this room or in any room of the house.

The whole description is quite comically untrue. Then comes the final picture of the man with piercing and cruel eyes. Here, however, Mrs. O'Shea gives herself away. She looked into his " slate-coloured " eyes. Whatever was the actual shade of brown or black, not one of the many artists who painted Mr. Gladstone has ever given the slightest tinge of " slate " to his eyes.

These may be trumpery details. I now deal with a more serious charge resting solely on Mrs. O'Shea's own statement. The details I have dealt with are designed by their very nature to give the impression of exact truth. But the facts I have given prove them to be inventions. Mrs. O'Shea had an obvious purpose. She wished to magnify the part she played and to create the impression that she had free access to Downing Street and possessed the close and unreserved confidence of Mr. Gladstone. I may observe here that Mrs. O'Shea did not publish a single one of Mr. Gladstone's letters. Why not ? The answer is that publication would have reduced Mrs. O'Shea's allegations to absurdity.

Bearing all this in mind, I pass to the main charge.

For ten years Gladstone had known of the relations between Parnell and myself, and had taken full advantage of the facility this intimacy offered him in keeping in touch with the Irish leader. For 10 years. But that was a private knowledge. Now it was a public knowledge, and an English statesman must always appear on the side of the angels.¹

¹ *Parnell*, ii. 164.

From the dates I have given of communications through Mrs. O'Shea, her period of ten years has to be limited to less than four years.

Mr. T. P. O'Connor, in giving evidence,¹ said that he first heard the relations between Parnell and Mrs. O'Shea discussed in 1885. Before then he had a suspicion but no certainty. It may be taken that Mr. Parnell's followers generally took the same views. His secretiveness kept all knowledge from them.

In 1882 Mr. Gladstone was absolutely without knowledge. I heard all the gossip of the Lobby and say emphatically that I had no knowledge, and though in later years suspicion grew, I had nothing more than gossip and rumour to go upon till the crash came.

Every sensible man can understand Mr. Gladstone's general position in such matters. He did not listen to gossip and scandal. Whether he was wise in accepting Mrs. O'Shea as an intermediary is a matter of opinion. Whether he knew the truth is a question of fact. In public life co-operation for the public welfare would be impossible were responsible men to determine their personal relationships on the babble of scandal-mongers and unproved allegations. No rule binds men in these matters in private life. In public life public opinion demands that a line shall be drawn when certain things are proved. As a general rule they can only be proved in a court of law. Political ethics must have regard to opinion but they are not necessarily moral codes. Mr. Gladstone made no distinction without proof.

There was no evidence of any kind in 1882. Mrs. O'Shea had nothing against her. She was living with her husband. She was sister to Evelyn Wood (Field - Marshal Sir E. Wood),

¹ *Wright v. Gladstone*, 1927.

and niece of Lord Hatherley, Mr. Gladstone's former colleague I knew Captain O'Shea well. He told me himself that his wife was very friendly with Parnell and that it would be well for Mr. Gladstone to see her. She asked for an interview, and because direct information from Parnell was of urgent importance, Mr. Gladstone granted it. It was the first of the three which took place, *all of them in 1882*

In 1885, so far as Mr. Gladstone was concerned, the position was unchanged. In the second period of communications letters passed, but no further interviews occurred.

Mr. Gladstone saw Parnell for the first time in personal interview in February 1886, and afterwards saw him repeatedly. After 1886 Mrs. O'Shea, beyond two letters already referred to, drops out of sight. So far from seeking and making use of her for his own exigencies, Mrs. O'Shea herself took the initiative in such communications as there were. Had it been otherwise it is certain that Mrs. O'Shea would have produced his letters to support her case.

The statement that Mr. Gladstone knew the facts of her relationship to Parnell is a falsehood. No one knew, not even Captain O'Shea—as shown by Mrs. O'Shea herself, and in greater detail by Mr. St. John Ervine.¹ Mrs. O'Shea acted absolutely under the direction of Parnell, and the last man to whom he desired to convey information, so carefully concealed from his own colleagues, was Mr. Gladstone.

Had the allegation that Mr. Gladstone knew the facts been, as Mrs. O'Shea states, true or even hypothetically true, one thing is certain. After the rupture in 1890, when Mr. Parnell attacked Mr. Gladstone with positive ferocity, he would

¹ *Parnell*, by St. John Ervine.

have used the circumstance with damning effect. But although he was under no moral or legal restraint whatever, though no code, social or political, compelled his silence, he said nothing of the kind.

It has been said that Mr. Gladstone condemned Parnell's immorality. That was what he passionately refused to do. "What," he cried, "because a man is what is called leader of a party, does that constitute him a censor and a judge of faith and morals? I will not accept it. It would make life intolerable"¹ But he knew that Parnell's continued leadership would be impossible and must wreck the whole position. The conscience of the Churches, whether Nonconformist or other Churches, was and is an honest and an honourable conscience, and the proceedings in the Divorce Court raised an inevitable storm. In his action he had to face inexorable facts and only one course was possible.

Mrs. O'Shea's picture of her relations with Parnell is a touching story of deep and passionate love as true and pathetic as it was tragic and disastrous. I am only concerned where, because of that devotion and passion, she has made personal charges and innuendoes against Mr. Gladstone which are unfounded.

¹ Morley, *Life of Gladstone*, vol. ii p. 435.

CHAPTER VII

THE HAWARDEN KITE

“A poor thing but mine own.”

ON December 17, 1885, the “Hawarden Kite” flew. I was the bird, and the flight was on my own initiative and sole responsibility.¹ As everyone said or implied that it was wrong and disastrous, I suppose it was. Yet forty-three years later I am not quite sure. Lord Morley, handling my youthful adventure gently, observes: “Never was there a moment when every consideration of political prudence more imperatively counselled silence”. Was it so? I doubt it.

I have got so accustomed to blame from the wise and prudent that for a time I thought it must be deserved and for years dismissed the matter from my thoughts. Looking at it now quite squarely, I think I had a strong case, and anyhow, after unbroken silence, I give it.

In the autumn of 1885 I knew what was happening, and Mr. Gladstone spoke daily to me with complete frankness. I knew the difficulty of his position and that it was a first duty not to add to it by indiscretion. Declaring my adhesion to Home Rule, I had won my own election fight at

¹ The “kite” was supposed to be inspired revelations in the press of Mr. Gladstone’s views on Home Rule which caused a sensation at the time.

Leeds. No inference had been drawn from that—as it might have been.

In December the position was this. Mr. Gladstone, isolated at Hawarden, was engrossed in his Irish studies. Bright had been there and was strongly anti-Parnellite rather than anti-Home Rule. Lord Spencer had also been a guest and the results of the Irish election had turned his mind seriously to Home Rule.

Hartington, careful in mind and slow in action, maintained his dislike to any concession in the direction of self-government, but without final or even definite opposition. Chamberlain (who had also been to Hawarden) and Dilke, the Radical leaders, were considering two possible courses of action. First, agreement on terms with Mr. Gladstone, should he continue in public life, (a) on Ireland, (b) on general social policy; and second, an advanced Radical movement without him under Chamberlain's leadership.

Mr. Gladstone's continuance as leader depended on the acceptance of a Home Rule policy by the party.

Everything was in a state of doubt and flux. The public knew that in Midlothian Mr. Gladstone, as Lord Morley says, "instead of minimising magnified the Irish case, pushed it into the very forefront, not in one speech, but in nearly all". They knew that he would deal with Ireland, and probably on Home Rule lines. How he would deal with Home Rule, which was a vague and rather terrifying term, they did not know. Still less did they know what his leading colleagues would think about it. Meanwhile the Conservative Government was still in touch with Parnell.

I knew that Mr. Chamberlain's mind had not been satisfied by his Hawarden visit and that if the party shelved Home Rule Mr. Gladstone

would retire. My own fixed point was Home Rule with Mr. Gladstone's leadership, but to secure this party unity was essential.

Without any information the Liberal press throughout the country was perplexed and confused. Labouchere and Wemyss Reid¹ urged that some line should be given to the press, as the state of general ignorance was seriously prejudicing the Home Rule position. Mr. Dawson Rogers, manager of the National Press Agency, which supplied leaders, letters, or other forms of literature to some 170 newspapers, wrote to me in similar terms. All these papers required information which they were unable to supply. He asked me to see him. Here again the lack of an effective Chief Whip told heavily against us.

At the same time I received an urgent letter from Sir Lyon Playfair² of the same nature. He wrote to me for this special reason. He had sat by Dilke at a political dinner. The upshot of what Dilke told him was that he and Chamberlain were in action for the shelving of Home Rule, which meant the retirement of Mr. Gladstone.

At this time everything was going wrong. Excepting Lord Spencer and Lord Granville, the Whigs were consolidating themselves against Home Rule. Mr. Bright was adverse. The Radical leaders were manoeuvring for their own position. Hardly a single paper in the country gave or could give clear support. In Leeds, the *Mercury* itself wobbled. To sum it up, Whig and Radical leaders were consolidating their position, not against Mr. Gladstone but against Home Rule—which was much the same thing.

¹ Editor of the *Leeds Mercury*, and subsequently of *The Speaker*.

² M.P., South Leeds. Chairman of Ways and Means Committee and Deputy Speaker of the House of Commons, 1880-83. Afterwards Lord Playfair. A distinguished chemist.

I can now bring in Morley himself as a witness. Writing to Spence Watson on December 15, he said : " Much dirty work is going on. I won't be a party to snubbing the Old Man." ¹

I am quite clear now that had I not acted the movements against us would have taken definite shape. Something had to be done. Mr. Gladstone himself could not speak, for at the time he had nothing to add to his Midlothian speeches and, moreover, he was on the point of suggesting through Mr. Balfour that the Conservatives should take up Home Rule. My view was that his position was being compromised by the attitude of some of his own colleagues. If unchecked, they would queer the pitch and in all probability would make the continued leadership of Mr. Gladstone impracticable. Counter-action was only possible by giving a lead to the party at large.

What right had I to take action ?

Mr. F. W. Hirst says :

Even if the " History of an Idea " rescues Gladstone as Home Ruler from the charge of intellectual precipitancy, it does not excuse his neglect of the laws of political psychology, or of those elementary prejudices and passions which control and govern political combinations.

Lord Richard Grosvenor had not formally resigned, and I don't think Mr. Gladstone fully realised how cut off he was from the usual channels of information and the assistance of an intermediary. He was not, however, so ignorant as Mr. Hirst supposes. He had general knowledge of the popular ignorance of his own position on Home Rule itself.

Both in letters and in private talks he had told me that there was no reason why I should not

¹ Hirst's *Early Life and Letters of John Morley*, vol. II. pp. 271-2.

state my own views of his position. This he had already formulated. Everything in the way of self-government was to be given to Ireland which was compatible with the supremacy of the Crown, the authority of the Imperial Parliament, and the security of the minority. It was a definite authorisation, and I took it to mean that he wished his position to be known by those whom it directly concerned. I had accordingly written or spoken freely to Labouchere, Bryce, and many others. But it was now evident that a crisis was imminent because Mr. Chamberlain was organising support for his own policy.

After his interview with Mr. Gladstone at Hawarden on October 7, Mr. Chamberlain came to my room to smoke. I told him what I knew of the position, and that Mr. Gladstone could not disclose his hand before the election. We had to await results. He was evidently much disturbed though very friendly.

The results of the election and Parnell's sweeping success in Ireland showed him that the continued leadership of Mr. Gladstone made Home Rule with a Parliament in Dublin inevitable. To the establishment of a Parliament Chamberlain was strongly opposed. My information clearly indicated that by December he had determined to take action against it. His programme would be supported by the Radicals. For Ireland there was the Central Board plan or postponement of Home Rule by referring it to a Commission of inquiry. This could be accompanied by a Land Purchase scheme. Adoption of this policy by a sufficient number of Radicals would ensure Mr. Gladstone's retirement.

It was quite possible that without counter-action Mr. Chamberlain would capture the National Liberal Federation. That would gravely

compromise Mr. Gladstone's position. The combination of Chamberlain and Dilke was formidable. There was no saying how far the mischief might go if nothing was done. It was useless to communicate with Lord R. Grosvenor. He was on the verge of final retirement, and he was dead against Home Rule. There was no one else to go to.

So on December 14 I went off to London. Mr. Gladstone knew nothing whatever of my intention. For what happened I was solely responsible. It may of course be said by opponents of Home Rule or Mr. Gladstone that if I had not acted as I did Mr. Chamberlain and Lord Hartington between them would have left Mr. Gladstone stranded, and brought about a desirable result in his retirement.

My motives were obvious. I was a convinced and keen Home Ruler. Home Rule was only possible through Liberal action under Mr. Gladstone's leadership. My object was to give the party the essential information.

I now quote from my diary :

Dec. 14 [1885] This morning a letter from Wemyss Reid on the tactics of the Radical leaders, especially Dilke, determined me to go to London to meet R[eid] and talk over the question with friends. Went up by 5 25 and called on Bryce at 11 p.m. in Bryanston Square. Found him full of the question, anxious to go ahead but perplexed by difficulties, *praecipue* land and police. Very loyal and thinks party will follow.

Dec. 15. Long talks with Labouchere at the N.L.C. and with Reid [afterwards Lord Loreburn] at the Reform, enlarging upon long letters I had written to both of them. R. tells me that Morley entirely disagrees with Dilke and approves altogether of the situation presented in my letter to R. R. promises to influence all the provincial papers to which he has access in the right direction. It is a triumph to have got over the L.M. [*Leeds Mercury*] and it will give us valuable help.

Labouchere gives curious accounts of R[andolph] [Churchill], *vide* his letters. R C . makes no secret of the fact that he wished to bargain with Parnell and that some of his colleagues favoured a very big measure of reform for Ireland which was rejected by Lord S[alisbury]. Spoke also to E. Ponsonby, Digby, Kitson,¹ Rogers, O'Connor Power. Dined with E. W H,² Henry James,³ Algy West—Lord Wolverton joining us eventually at Brooks'. Very pleasant Lord W quite a Radical, and H J. telling us amusing stories about Randolph.

Dec 16. Long talk with Dawson Rogers at the Nat. Press Agency Office in Whitefriars St., and with one of his Editors—Mr Austin Gave them the situation . . . Went back to Hⁿ by Irish Mail.

Dec. 17. Fat all in the fire *Standard* publishes "Authentic plan" of Mr G. and the evening papers and telegraph agencies go wild in the afternoon Hⁿ flooded with telegrams and all the world is agog. What a coil How very odd it is that people refuse to see their house is ablaze till the fire engines come to put it out. Every man of sense saw what was coming in [Ireland] this election, and what would have to follow. The inevitable is on us, that is all. So far as I can see the leakage has been considerable. . . . The N.P.A. has sent the whole cat out. . . . Father quite *compos*.

I omitted on the 16th to add that H. W. Massingham joined Mr. Austin. He was a friend of mine to his death, but neither of us ever referred to our first meeting.

Excepting two essential and one or two lesser points the account of my interview was accurate. The interview was lengthy. I was cross-examined and in the course of it expressed opinions which were definitely my own. The unforgivable error was made in gathering everything up—personal as well as political—and publishing it as Mr.

¹ Sir James Kitson, afterwards Lord Airedale, was chairman of the National Liberal Federation. It was most important to win over the Federation to Home Rule. This was accomplished

² Sir Edward Hamilton

³ Afterwards Lord James of Hereford.

Gladstone's own definite plans and opinions. I was asked my opinion of Lord Hartington's position, and gave it as such. This opinion was quoted as Mr. Gladstone's. I was made to say things I did not say. Consequently the *démenti* was entirely justified.

Mr. Gladstone took it all in perfect calmness. It caused him some personal trouble, particularly because of the allegation about Hartington. His Diary merely records :

Dec. 17. Wrote to Lord Hartington. Telegrams to Press Association, D News, and other quarters on the Irish rumours about me. Worked much on MS. Huxley controversy

Dec. 18. Wrote to Mr. Courtney, [letter] and tel. to Mr. Chamberlain, Lord Granville, Mr. Stead. . . Finished MS and despatched it to Mr. Knowles Read Burke: what a magazine of wisdom he is on Ireland and America.

Neither to me nor to any member of the family did Mr. Gladstone express regret at what had occurred. My belief is that he thought what had come had to come, though with advantage it might have come differently.

This was the only occasion in a long experience when I had to find serious fault with journalists. It was a complete distortion of what I had clearly said. But they were young, keen men—like myself then—and could not resist the temptation to garnish what I said. My great blunder was not in giving the interview, but in not making the condition that I should see what they proposed to publish. It was a lesson I did not forget.

From 1880 to 1895, and as Chief Whip for six years, I was almost daily approached by press-men from 1899 to 1905, and frequently at other periods. I invariably found them most honourable and discreet in fulfilling their promises and using information.

My fire-engine comment of December 17 was my form of humour at the time, yet there was truth in it. A *dénouement* had to come, but the manner caused explosion. Looking back as coolly as I can now, the consequences were by no means bad. Undoubtedly it made Mr. Gladstone's personal relations with his colleagues more difficult for a time, but it can hardly be supposed that the Whig leaders, who already knew the trend of his policy, though disturbed and irritated by the unconventional "revelations", took any action which but for the revelations they would not have taken.

On the other hand the "revelation" brought about certain definite results. Liberals and Radicals, realising the position, rallied to Home Rule. The Liberal press took the cue, and not only in London. Leading papers, like the *Manchester Guardian* and the *Leeds Mercury*, came out definitely for Mr. Gladstone and Home Rule. Even the *Scotsman* and *Western Morning News*—later on to become Unionist—were not unfavourable to the new departure.

The net result was the commitment of the party to Home Rule, led by Mr. Gladstone.

In short, I did what I thought and still think had to be done. No one else would, perhaps could, have made the venture.

So there I leave it, content at this safe distance of time to take any blame that may fairly be deserved.

PART III

QUEEN VICTORIA'S LETTERS.



CHAPTER I

MR. GLADSTONE AND THE QUEEN

" All that he desires is, that his views should be placed before your Majesty, and that they should be considered. Whatever your Majesty's final judgment under such circumstances, he is disposed to believe the best; nor is there anything that he would more deprecate than that your Majesty should ever, on any subject, give a constrained assent to any of his counsels. That would cause a cloud between your Majesty and himself, than which nothing could be more injurious to the satisfactory government of your Majesty's realm.

" His idea of the perfect relations between the Sovereign and her Minister is, that there should be, on her part, perfect confidence; on his, perfect devotion. In the blended influence of two such sentiments, so ennobling and so refined, he sees the best security for your Majesty's happiness, and the welfare of the realm."—Mr. DISRAELI to QUEEN VICTORIA, November 4, 1868.

THE publication of the Second Series, Volume III., of Queen Victoria's Letters has excited varied emotions. Some writers have given calm and impartial reflections. Many have rejoiced as those rejoice who divide the spoil. Others have been condemnatory, critical, or satirical. Most have been interested and even thrilled.

It was too much to hope that the one-sided contents of the book would be read by the light and meaning of history.

The long reign of the Queen is one of the outstanding facts in British history. It is a national possession. Neither adulation nor detraction can change or mar the greatness of its character as a whole.

Ye shall pray for Christ's holy Catholic Church, that is, for the whole congregation of Christian people dispersed

throughout the whole world, and especially for the Church of England, for all Christian Sovereigns, Princes and Governors, and herein for the Queen's most excellent Majesty, our sovereign Lady Queen Victoria, of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland and of the British Dominions beyond the Seas Queen, Defender of the Faith, over all persons, in all causes, as well ecclesiastical as temporal, throughout her Dominions Supreme.

The stately words of the Bidding Prayer rang through the decades in our ears. They brought to mind the British Empire, its glories, its vastness, its responsibilities concentrated and idealised in the person of the Sovereign, representative of all that the nation was, and all that the nation could do. The Queen commanded personal devotion, loyalty, service, for she was the embodiment of the nation itself.

To a position of unbounded opportunities and exacting burdens a young girl of eighteen had been called. In all that concerned her own life, her surroundings, her pursuits, whether for good or evil, she was absolutely her own mistress. For sixty-three years as girl, wife, mother, and queen, perfect in domestic life, with supreme honesty, singleness of purpose and zeal, she never ceased to work for what she considered right in the conduct of national affairs.

In the long story of high aims and ceaseless effort how little matter some errors of judgment, some human weaknesses, some failure to appreciate the difficulties, responsibilities, and character of those on whom she had to rely.

What a wonderful position. There is no limitation to the right exercise of character and intellect, to the influence of individual wisdom, knowledge, and beneficence. True the monarchy is limited by the Constitution. The very limitation removes danger and anxiety, and gives greater freedom to

good action and to the inspiration of ministers and subjects alike so that they may better strive for the common well-being.

The expressed wish of the Sovereign in the social life of the nation is a command. In public affairs counsel, caution, encouragement can be given to the ministers, and on them lies the responsibility for acceptance or rejection. At all times and seasons it is the Sovereign who best can draw the attention of the nation to its weakest points and so initiate movements for the relief of hardship and suffering, for the promotion of knowledge and happiness. It is this power which should ever be the strength and glory of the British monarchy.

Volume III. contains much that is of great interest altogether dissociated from political affairs and contentions. Apart from the central figure, Mr. Gladstone is primarily concerned. The decision to publish the new series of the Queen's letters was courageous and wise. It is best that all should know the truth. This makes it all the more regrettable that Mr. Buckle's partiality renders a fair judgment impossible.

It would seem as if there had been a definite scheme of attack on Mr. Gladstone by Mr. Buckle. In his *Life of Disraeli* (1920) with his own strictures on Mr. Gladstone are published the diatribes of the Queen. In 1926 fire is again opened in Volume II. of the Second Series. In 1928 comes the final salvo in the third volume.

It is a one-sided attack. It covers, so far as Mr. Gladstone is concerned, the period from 1868 to 1885. I shall not have occasion to say much about the first seven years of this period for the Queen's letters show that her relations with Mr. Gladstone were then friendly. From 1876 the obvious purpose to present Lord Beaconsfield

in the best light and Mr. Gladstone in the worst runs through all these publications. This is conclusively shown by the deductions from Volume III. in the press reviews.

Reviewers fall generally into the error of supposing that the Queen's hostility to Mr. Gladstone was due to a dislike from the first of his personality. But beyond any doubt his relations with the Queen were good and friendly up to 1876. The new-born dislike of Mr. Gladstone synchronised in its development with the rapid growth of Lord Beaconsfield's personal ascendancy over the Queen.

Lord Morley found no space for a picture of Mr. Gladstone's friendships with men and women. To this omission, perhaps, is due much of the nonsense which is written on the pedantic lonesome austerity which is supposed to have been a leading characteristic. It would be difficult to find anyone whose friendship was more sought for and valued. Eton, Oxford, and later attachments developed and became permanent. Many of his greatest friends were women. With them he was at his best, because they readily drew the gaiety and humour so well known to the family.

“After being with such a personality the world felt cold and stagnant”,¹ wrote Lady Ribblesdale, a very shrewd and perhaps rather an exacting critic of men, after a visit to Hawarden.

Lady Frederick Cavendish, in her diary,² shows that he had precisely those qualities most valued by intelligent women. He was genial, sympathetic, simple, deferential, responsive to humour. He made the best of anyone he was speaking to, and gave his best. These qualities were—up to a definite date—appreciated by the Queen, but there

¹ *Nineteenth Century*, April 1904.

² Edited by John Bailey, 1927.

was a drawback. She had no sense of humour. That is apparent enough in her strange, tacit acceptance of Lord Beaconsfield's most high-flown efforts.

Mr. Gladstone's conception of the Queen's position was real and deep. He entered the presence with a reverence second only to his reverence in entering a church. It was for the Queen to give the cue, but she rarely encouraged the lighter side of intercourse. Mr. Disraeli broke through the wall with extraordinary and fascinating audacity. His letters are lit with humour year after year. The Queen, surprised, interested, becomes enthralled. She accepts, and replies with appreciation, gratitude, affection. But never does she reciprocate in wit or humour.

Mr. Gladstone was very serious over affairs of state. So was the Queen. If only she had known how to chaff him ! Then the ice would have gone. All the Queen's letters to Mr. Gladstone from 1841 to 1894 are in the possession of his executors. Down to 1876 there is not a single letter which shows a trace of personal dislike. Quite the contrary. In 1880 and subsequently, apart from certain peculiarities of style, the letters, in tone and character, might have been written by another person, so great is the contrast.

There is an even greater contrast in the Queen's diary. Moreover, in the later period personal antagonism to her own minister in her letters is freely expressed to other people. Her attitude to him entirely, absolutely, finally changed. It is quite obvious that if this had been due to Mr. Gladstone's personality there would have been some indication at an earlier period. There is none.

Yet the progressive activities of Mr. Gladstone's 1868 administration were by no means to the Queen's liking. She looked with suspicion

on the Irish Acts. She was on the side of the Duke of Cambridge in Army reform. But there was no friction.

There was one source of trouble. Lowe (Chancellor of the Exchequer) and Ayrton (First Commissioner of Works) by certain utterances and actions had deeply offended her. She pressed for their removal, and complained of the delay in meeting her wishes. No easy matter to remove colleagues, but changes were ultimately made.

When the position of the Government was endangered by the Irish University Bill, the Queen wrote in March 1873 hoping that he (Mr. Gladstone) would get a sufficient majority to enable him to go on, and trusted that "he would not let any natural annoyance and disappointment weigh with him more than he could help". This was remarkable, for by that time Mr. Gladstone's Government was getting unpopular in the country. The Queen would never have written those words had there been personal dislike—at the time.

The change in the Queen's references in and after 1877 is so startling in its newness and intensity, and so absolutely different from all that she wrote and said up to that date, that clearly it was due to a novel and special cause. The cause was the influence of Lord Beaconsfield.

What was this influence? Undoubtedly Lord Beaconsfield, as he himself said, made flattery of women an invariable practice. He did not spare the wives and daughters of his political opponents. With royalty the "trowel" was necessary. Lord Salisbury, writing from Berlin to Lady Salisbury about Lord Beaconsfield in June 1878, said :

B and I had to go and see Augusta [the German Empress] to-day—in evening dress! She was very foolish and B.'s compliments were a thing to hear!¹

¹ *Life of Lord Salisbury*, vol. II p 280.

It was characteristic, and not sincere. The trait is manifest in Mr Disraeli's letters to the Queen during his short administration in 1868. It began again at once when he took office in 1874, and soon developed to unlimited adulation. The Queen should be "directress" and "arbitress" of Europe! Everything was in the superlative. Supreme in knowledge and experience, it was her right to impress her policy on the Cabinet. So it came about that Disraeli led the Queen to believe and feel that his Eastern policy was her policy as well as his own, and that Mr. Gladstone, in attacking this policy, was deliberately attacking the Queen herself.

As we know through Mr. Buckle, there was complete "concinnity" between the Queen and Mr. Disraeli in regarding Mr. Gladstone as vain, rash, selfish, wild, foolish, and unpatriotic. Mr. Disraeli carefully nursed in the Queen's mind the idea of his own greatness and Mr. Gladstone's littleness, until it took fixed and indivisible shape. The unreality of it all was shown by his cynical observation that the trowel was necessary in dealing with royalties.

"Is there not", wrote Lord Derby in May 1874, "just a risk of encouraging her in too large ideas of her personal power, and too great indifference to what the public expects?"¹ "It may be", admits Mr. Buckle, "that Disraeli, before he had conquered an unassailable position in his Sovereign's regard, made no objection, at any rate in matters of small account, to a possibly undue influence of personal volition." Another volume could not have said more.

Having won the unassailable position, Lord Beaconsfield tells the Queen that her policy is his policy. "He lives only for Her, and works only

¹ *Life of Disraeli*, vol. vi. p. 457.

for Her, and without Her all is lost" (March 8, 1878). The Queen appears to have taken all this quite seriously, without a flicker of humour.

Mr. Disraeli's opinion of Mr. Gladstone in 1876 is told by Mr. Buckle with relish. In writing to the Queen Mr. Disraeli hardly mentions him. It was enough that he described his conduct as worse than the Bulgarian atrocities ; that to Lady Bradford he was pictured as Tartuffe, and to Lord Derby as an unprincipled maniac, a mixture of envy, vindictiveness, and hypocrisy, never a gentleman.¹ A mild reflection of these charitable views is evident in the Queen's letters.

Throughout this correspondence in what measure do we find serious information, advice, or guidance ? Democracy was surging up in all directions. The people had begun to realise their necessities and to see remedies through agitation and action. Power had been given in 1867 and more was to come. There was danger ahead. How did it affect the Crown, the Constitution, society in general ? For light on the great issues which were taking shape we vainly search Lord Beaconsfield's letters to the Queen. They deal with every conceivable subject which would interest and amuse her. She is led to place an absolute trust in the knowledge and wisdom of her Prime Minister. Everything he says is true. In the last stage she never questions his judgment. He keeps the Queen blind to the movements of opinion in the country ; while he pours contempt on Mr. Gladstone and all his followers. In the end the Queen is convinced that Mr. Gladstone has deluded the country, and entirely fails to see that she herself has been deluded by her favourite minister.

¹ *Life of Disraeli*, vol. vi. p. 67.

So Mr. Gladstone entered into his heritage of the Queen's dislike and disfavour. It was a heavy burden on a hard-driven man.

The Queen's letters with which I am specially concerned are published down to the end of 1885. I have read her letters to Mr. Gladstone up to his final retirement in 1894. There is no change in them. Ireland took the place of the Eastern Question.

The public have access to documents showing the attitude of the Queen to Mr. Gladstone and the singular methods by which it was manifested. What then did he think of it? In answering this question I cannot treat 1885 as a limiting date.

He lived and died without a word of complaint or reproach to anyone. What he felt is made clear by brief and occasional entries in his Diary, and in certain memoranda.

It is no part of my purpose, even had I the requisite knowledge, to diagnose the thoughts of Queen Victoria. But on one point I am clear. Dislike came in 1876 and not before. Recent publications and reviews—hostile to Mr. Gladstone—sedulously declare that this dislike had always existed. There is a motive in this.

Lord Beaconsfield's friends are sensitive about his methods of capturing the Queen's affection. They know quite well that if he used his official position and its opportunities for undermining not only Mr. Gladstone's policy but for depreciating his personal character in the mind of the Sovereign in order to establish his own ascendancy at the expense of his opponent, he would at once be exposed to very serious criticism.

The Queen's personal hostility during the last twenty years of his life is only too evident. When

did it begin, and why? Naturally the eulogists of Lord Beaconsfield will not admit that the date was 1876, and the cause Lord Beaconsfield himself. Therefore the only course open to them was to assert that Mr. Gladstone's personality—duly tuned by them to the purpose—had always been disliked by the Queen, and that this dislike was only intensified by his policy on the Eastern Question and Ireland.

Candid observers will notice that in no single case has any attempt been made to prove this thesis. Dislike from the first is asserted as something established and beyond question. This allegation has been made so constantly with such an air of historic truth that even Liberal writers have fallen into the trap and have accepted what is in fact untrue.

My purpose, then, is to prove that personal relations with the Queen were good and friendly up to 1876. The first overt proof of a change came in 1877. Up to 1876 she had sometimes disagreed with his policy, but she had invariably been kind and courteous to him, and never, so far as I know, used a harsh word about him. Then on February 14, 1877, comes a sudden change. Writing to Lord Beaconsfield the Queen says she "has seen Sir H. Elliot and must say she thinks what he says is very sensible. He is perfectly astounded at Mr. Gladstone, his wildness, folly, and fury!" From that time onward the Queen changed her view of Mr. Gladstone absolutely and permanently. From that date she had not a good word either for him or—and this is important—for the Liberal party. Her sympathies, constantly expressed in emphatic language, were to the end of her life strongly anti-Liberal.

It may be that in his short administration of 1867 Mr. Disraeli gained some ground in the

Queen's estimation at Mr. Gladstone's expense. She did not like Mr. Gladstone's Irish legislation. But there is not a word in her letters, or in Mr. Gladstone's records, or so far as I know any evidence whatever to support the thesis of personal dislike at that time.

When Lord Morley wrote his biography the question had not arisen in any definite form. Even if it had, the time was not ripe for treatment. It is now necessary to bring in Mr. Gladstone himself as a witness. His private views of the Queen left on record, up to the day of his death reached no eye with the possible exception of Mrs. Gladstone's. My brothers Stephen, Henry, and I, as executors, gave Lord Morley free access to them. Apart from that, in the maintenance of strict secrecy we have been loyal to Mr. Gladstone's expressed wishes. Mr. Buckle's action has entirely changed the position

From the time when he became a member of Sir Robert Peel's Government up to his first ministry in 1868 he was treated by the Queen and the Prince Consort with marked consideration and regard. With the Prince he was closely associated for years in connection with the work of the Great Exhibition of 1851. Though there was not perhaps any close personal affinity, each held the other in high esteem because of a common devotion to all that concerned the greatness of the nation.

The Prince died in December 1861. Mr. Gladstone, in a short note written at the time, gives an interesting appreciation.

Although my recollections of the Prince Consort cannot possibly have the value which must attach to those of others, yet I wish to place them on record in honour of so remarkable a man. Nor in this private Memorandum shall

I scruple to put down *all* the little that I have known or thought about him

My praise will be impartial · for he did not fascinate, or command, or attract me through any medium but that of judgment and conscience. There was I think a want of freedom, nature, and movement in his demeanour, due partly to a faculty and habit of reflection that never intermitted, partly to an inexorable watchfulness over all he did and said, which produced something that was related to stillness and chillness in a manner which was notwithstanding invariably modest, frank and kind even to one who had no claims upon him for the particular exhibition of such qualities.

Later on his review of Sir Theodore Martin's biography gave much pleasure to the Queen.

On Saturday, March 19, 1862, he was summoned to Windsor. He was to see the Queen at 7 P.M. before dinner.

To this interview he referred briefly in a letter to the Duchess of Sutherland.¹

I was really bewildered, but all that vanished when the Queen came in and kept my hand a moment. All was beautiful, noble, touching to the very last degree. It was a meeting for me to be remembered

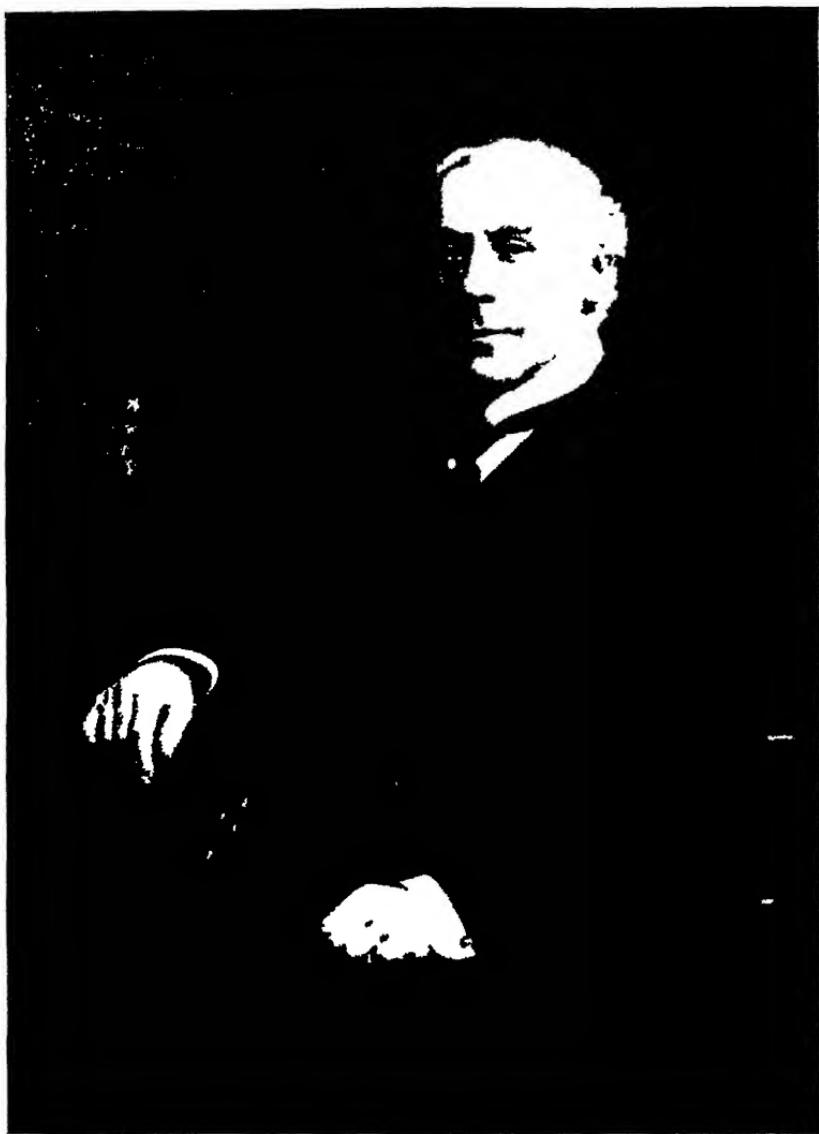
Rarely was he more profoundly moved.

Excepting the resignation in 1894, his private records of innumerable audiences are recorded with great brevity. On this special occasion he at once wrote a full and detailed account in twelve quarto pages. The Queen opened to him all that was in her mind. I forbear to give the full details of the memorandum. The ground is too sacred.

WINDSOR CASTLE.

I was summoned here on Saturday by a message through Lord Granville and having arrived in the afternoon of to-day I was sent for to see the Queen between seven and half-past. It was in the small room where the Prince

¹ Morley's *Life of Gladstone*, vol. II. p. 89.



Photo, Elliott & Fry, Ltd

HENRY NEVILLE GLADSTONE

Lord Lieutenant of Flintshire

Consort used to sit that I was placed to await her, and the memory of many long and interesting conversations with all their associations coming back upon me joined with a vague uncertainty about the Queen and about my own behaviour to one at once my Sovereign and a widowed fellow-creature to give me a feeling of uneasiness very different from any feeling with which I had ever before anticipated her approach.

In a few minutes she entered with her usual simple dignity. After bowing I fell on my knee to kiss her hand. She took mine, held it for two or three moments and pressed it. She told me much by that slight action.

Then follows an account of opening conversation for a quarter of an hour on Mrs. Gladstone, the state of the country (there was great distress in Lancashire owing to the civil war in America), and disturbances in Greece. This led to the Greek Church, and an interesting point.

The working of that Church in social respects was much more like the Protestant than the Roman one. What, said she, had they not confession like the Roman Church? I said not like the Roman Church at all, they had none of the same assumptions to direct the conscience, none of the same interference with family relations; and that the Greek priest being a family man was in all respects a citizen quite as much as the clergyman of this country—nay perhaps even more because their religion was so intimately associated with the preservation of their national life during their degradation. She warmly assented and said this was perhaps the most important point of all. . . . She now looked down for a moment and changing the theme said that the nation had been very good and kind to her in her time of sorrow. She struggled not to give way while she spoke the artless appeal, but as she spoke it she seemed the most womanly of all the women in her dominions. The splendour and the majesty were as though they were not. She spoke as the heir of our common flesh and blood. She paused and I replied that the nation gave all it could, gave it knowing how it had been deserved, and in giving it only felt and lamented that their sympathy and affection were so much weaker than they would have them be: that they

knew her sorrow to be beyond their help and that the Almighty alone could be her consolation. She said that she had felt the help of their affection, but that her grief was very heavy and such as could not be measured.

Then for nearly an hour the Queen and Mr. Gladstone spoke about the Prince Consort in all the phases of his character, work, influence, and the greatness of the loss to herself and the country. I give the closing pages.

Speaking of the gap that his death had made she said there was no one to fill it. I assented and said it could not at once be filled. I might have gone a little further in the language of hope and was afterwards sorry that I did not.

At a little after eight a servant came in and said it was the dinner hour. She bade me farewell with great kindness, and with more than kindness said "I earnestly pray it may be long before you are severed from each other." She had before, during the conversation, said to me, *You are very happy in your domestic relations, so you can judge of what I feel.*

I kissed her hand again and said in retiring, "God bless you, Madam, God bless you."

I have given a weak account of a conversation full of interest. It was impossible not to be deeply touched and moved by her simple and noble sorrow. Grief is often querulous: but there was not a word of murmur, nor so much as a tone that suggested discontent. Grief is often exacting: hers seemed to be all gratitude for the sympathy shown her, and desire not to give pain to others. Nothing tries, and nothing shows, real artlessness so much as an occasion which leads to self-depreciation: I was astonished at her humility, particularly because though she can at this moment feel and realise to herself little except the weight and pressure of her affliction, I never was more struck with the firm texture and elasticity of her mind, and her marked dignity and strength of character. I came away from her not only with heightened interest and admiration, but with a firm conviction that this trial, heavy as it is and almost without parallel, will work the purposes of love for which it has been sent forth, and that her future will be blest as her past has been, and yet more abundantly.

Mr. Gladstone added a notable postscript.

P S The Queen mentioned (saying she knew I had the same feeling) the extreme pain which it gave the Prince to observe the tone often assumed by the press of this country towards foreign States and nations, and that while he admired the working of the press with regard to domestic characters and institutions, when all sides are heard and on the whole get fair play, he thought it worked far less well in foreign policy from its onesidedness

The Queen mentioned that the weight of the Prince's business had continually and much increased, and that much of what they had formerly been used to do together—almost including their playing on the pianoforte—had been of necessity given up before the end came

It is to be noticed that in 1862 Mr. Gladstone was not Prime Minister. Why did she send for the Chancellor of the Exchequer? It was not for the discussion of politics or business, but to speak to him on what lay nearest to her heart and to invoke his personal help and counsel. This fact alone shatters the thesis of personal dislike. No one, least of all a woman in such circumstances, would have sought in so intimate a manner the aid of a man unless she held him in real and even warm regard.

What the Queen herself felt is evident from a letter to Mr. Gladstone, written by one of her most intimate friends, Dean Wellesley, after the interview :

She saw how much you felt for her, and the mind of a person in such deep affliction is keenly sensitive and observant. Of all her ministers she seemed to me to think that you had most entered into her sorrows and she dwelt especially upon the manner in which you had parted from her.

I have already described the general relations between the Queen and Mr. Gladstone during the administration of 1868-74. Of the audience on

December 5, 1868, when he took office he records in his Diary, "All well". In a short memorandum he says, "The Queen was kind, cheerful, even playful".

On the 18th: "Saw the Queen at 1, and stated the case of the Irish Church. It was graciously received."

I now advert to a remark attributed to the Queen which has been constantly quoted to show how incapable he was in his appreciation of her mind. "Mr. Gladstone addresses me as if I were a public meeting." A great many people besides politicians are frequently guilty of that mode of address in private talk.

It is a good story and if true may have had some foundation on one or more occasions. It is wrongly said that he bored the Queen with arguments she did not want and could not understand. She constantly asked for explanations, and complained when she did not get them. Unlike Mr. Disraeli, Mr. Gladstone was responsible for much legislation of wide scope and great complexity. Even Mr. Disraeli could not have explained Irish Disestablishment in epigrams and airy description. Mr. Gladstone's earnestness and desire to make things clear may at times have been too much for the Queen. Many people, and particularly women, are apt to be bored by incontestable arguments for something they don't like. But to say that this mode of address was characteristic is absurd. First, because Mr. Gladstone's invariable courtesy to women forbade it. Secondly, because time was always short.

In 1871 there is one of the few records which gives details of an audience. The Prince of Wales was happily recovering from an almost fatal illness which had profoundly stirred the

sympathies of the whole country. The Government considered the most fitting form on the part of the Queen of acknowledgment and response to be a public service in St. Paul's. To this Mr. Gladstone found the Queen in a pronounced mood of resistance. Mr. Gladstone's memorandum is illustrative and interesting.

Windsor, Dec 21.71 The Queen received a letter yesterday from Ld Halifax, in which he expressed pleasure at hearing that she had agreed to go in state to St. Paul's to return thanks for the recovery (on its being completed or sufficiently advanced) of the Prince of Wales. Of this I heard on reaching Windsor yesterday and I learned that it had much discomposed the Queen. She had, upon the occasion thus given, written a letter to Col Ponsonby, in which she very clearly and succinctly separated three subjects. First, some communication, by which she should make known to the country her warm sense of the sympathy and loyalty shown during the illness. Secondly, a form of thanksgiving to be read in public worship throughout the country. Thirdly, this idea of a procession to St. Paul's: on which she did not, in the letter, put an absolute negation, but she treated it as something ulterior and contingent, to be considered separately, if at all, on its own merits.

I told the Queen her view of the case had been communicated to me and I entirely concurred in it. It was then decided by H M. to write to me a letter, in which she should express her own feelings for herself, about the manifestation of sympathy by the people. this I am to send to Bruce as Home Secretary for publication. As respects the form of thanksgiving, I said that Sir W. Jenner had informed me that Dr Gull and he could not as yet speak of any particular interval, after which convalescence might be reasonably anticipated, and until they had done so it seemed plain that nothing could be said. I was then proceeding to introduce the other subject, that of going solemnly to St Paul's, when the Queen delivered a very strong declaration against it. She objected to it because she disliked in an extreme degree the Cathedral service. She objected still more because she thought such a display, in point of religion, false and hollow. She considered that no religious act ought ever to be allied with pomp or show. Nothing should induce

her to be a party to it. It would be of no use to press her as this was her conviction with regard to the religious part of the subject.

I first tried the point of time, and said that there could be no occasion to press H M. at present, as it would be premature. But she said it was no question of time with her, that she wished now to deal with it once for all, and that she hoped I would never return to the subject.

Then I fell back on the Princess of Wales,¹ and said I had understood she was very desirous that there should be a public and solemn Act of this kind by which to render thanks: and I could not help thinking that very probably the Prince of Wales would share this feeling. I said it would be very difficult to refuse to her the gratification of such a wish. The Queen replied she did not think the Princess of Wales would now press it so much, after what she (the Queen) had said to her.

“ Well, Madam,” I said, “ I grant all that your Majesty has urged with reference to the nature of these ceremonials, if they are to be considered merely as vehicles for the expression of the religious feelings of those who are to be the principal actors in them. But in the first place I feel convinced that there will be a very general desire expressed for something of this character, and if done it will give universal satisfaction. The sympathy of the country has gone beyond precedent—and beyond description: feeling has been wrought up to the highest point, and nothing short of a great public act of this kind can prove an adequate answer to it. But besides this, Madam, let it be considered if you please whether Y.M. or those who are to appear as principal personages may not properly cast aside all thought of themselves, and their own feelings, in the matter: it may be most unsatisfactory to them individually, but ought we not to remember the great religious importance of such an act for the people at large. on them it will make a deep impression—it will be a signal honour done to religion in their view. There are in these times but few occasions on which great national acts of religion can be performed, and this appears to be one of them, for which the opportunity has now been offered ”

These considerations appeared to tell very much with the Queen. I then dwelt upon the extreme solemnity of

¹ Afterwards Queen Alexandra.

the occasion not only for the Prince, as any one after such an illness must be decidedly a better or a worse man for it, and not only for the Queen and Royal Family, but for the future of the Monarchy and of the country as connected with it. It had worked in an extraordinary manner to the effect of putting down that disagreeable movement with which the name of Sir C Dilke had been connected. And what we should look to I thought was not merely meeting that movement by a more powerful display of opposite opinion, but to getting rid of it altogether, for it never could be satisfactory that there should exist even a fraction of the nation republican in its views To do this it would be requisite to consider every mode in which this great occasion could be turned to account, and if possible to take away the causes which had led to the late manifestations

The Queen urged that the state of things in France had had much to do with them and that in 1848 the case was worse.

I admitted both but said that since 1848 the foundation of the movement of that date had been broken up and all tendencies of that kind pretty well got rid of. also that it was to be feared that France might continue for a long time to be a source of sympathetic excitement, mischievously disturbing this country I glanced at the necessity of finding for the Prince of Wales some means of living worthily of his great position and greater prospects : but this brought out no direct response . . .

The latter part of the conversation turned more upon details the Queen urging in turn all the difficulties. The uncertainty whether the Prince's health might allow him to take part, until the season was far advanced, when the ceremony would have lost all meaning Then she said it would be more convenient and appropriate at Westminster Abbey where they were crowned. I said it was bad to go against the established tradition, as it provoked adverse remark : such for instance would be the case if a Sovereign desired to be crowned at St Paul's. At length the Queen contracted her objection to the length of the service : and here I was able entirely to agree that the whole proceeding would have to be shortened I referred H.M. to the Annual Register of 1789 (from which it appears that the Commons set out at 8 A M ; the King and Queen at 10, and their Majesties only returned to the Palace at half-past three).

When her objection was at the highest, I observed to the Queen that there were various works in which if she were able to take part her participation might be arranged and reminded her of her appearance at Windsor on the occasions of Royal Marriages in St George's Chapel

I also told her in the course of arguing for the proposal that I admitted its religious importance was that of a symbol, but it was not therefore to be accounted slight: Royalty was in one point of view a symbol, and one of great consequence its character and duties had greatly changed among us in modern times, but perhaps in the new forms they were not less important than in the old . . .

At one moment she started the idea that a day of Thanksgiving might be appointed to be observed as a general holiday I argued that this would be viewed by many as an actual hardship, and by many more as involving something like a character of compulsion. Whereas if the procession to St. Paul's set the example, while the day would be very much kept, I thought, all the observance would have the grace of being entirely voluntary

The upshot of the whole was that the Queen is in no way committed, and that the whole idea is subject to considerations of health, but it is entertained, and not unfavourably. At one time the Queen said the Prince and Princess might go without her but she did not dwell on this, and I think saw that it would not do very well.

W E G , Xmas Day '71.

The Queen had begun with a hard *non possum*. She ended in a friendly spirit of consideration. When the Prince's restoration to health was assured she agreed without further difficulty to Mr. Gladstone's proposals. The historic ceremony at St. Paul's took place.

This record shows with what care and courtesy he met the Queen's views and ideas.

In 1874, on February 7, Mr. Gladstone went to Windsor to take leave. The Queen agreed with all his suggestions, and in the interview, which lasted for three-quarters of an hour, Mr. Gladstone says in a memorandum, "that nothing could

be more frank, natural and kind than her manner throughout".

The Queen may have been vexed about his suggestion of a royal residence in Ireland; she knew that he had lost popularity in the country; she may have desired a rest after the intense and ceaseless legislative work with which she was not in full sympathy. For these reasons she may well have thought that a change of government was desirable. But up to this date she was "frank, natural and kind". She told him she knew she could depend upon him for support to the throne. Personal good-will did not stop here. She received appreciatively Mr. Gladstone's writings on Vaticanism and sent him the work of Sir Theodore Martin. Even his opposition to the Public Worship and Royal Titles Acts, which Mr. Disraeli took good care to bring to her notice, seems to have made no definite impression on her.

I pass now to the period of change.

During the three years before 1880 rumours and stories of the change reached Mr. Gladstone. The series of favours conferred on Lord Beaconsfield, culminating in the visit to Hughenden, and all announced in the public press, showed quite clearly what was taking place. On these events he kept absolute silence, and has left no record of opinion.

For three months after taking office (in 1880) there is no comment in the Diary on his audiences with the Queen. The old relations had gone, never to return. For fifteen years the Queen never missed an opportunity of emphasising the fact. He was slow to realise the real nature of the change. Had he known that the Queen had been in secret communication with Lord

Beaconsfield for the purpose of thwarting any policy distasteful to them, he would have quickly realised the full meaning of the altered demeanour.

Not long after Mr. Gladstone had taken office in 1880 I asked him when the change—well known to the family—had begun. He told me that his relations were good and friendly through his term of office, though at one time (I think in 1870) he noticed a certain coldness after his proposal for a royal residence in Ireland, and more occupation for the Prince of Wales. In 1880 he found a complete change, and thought it came from the influence of Lord Beaconsfield.

On July 16, 1881, for the first time, he records the change in his Diary. He had had an audience.

She is as ever perfect in her courtesy but as to confidence she holds me now at arm's length

November 30, 1881. Off to Windsor. Much civility . . . but I am always outside an iron ring, and without any desire, had I the power, to break it through.

The correspondence published in Volume III. tells its own tale up to June 1885, when the Queen accepted his resignation with coldness and evident relief.

The iron ring was maintained rigid and unbroken. He held quietly on his course. But occasionally even his patience was sorely tried. He docketed one missive : "To this rather foolish letter I shall make no reply".

On March 26 she wrote that she had read a speech of Mr. Gladstone's "*with deep and unfeigned regret*".

This is Mr. Gladstone's minute :

After this letter of rebuke from the Queen had caused me to write two long letters to H.M. on the subject, I learned with surprise that the Queen when she wrote it had not read

my speech but only a summary of it which proved to be incorrect! No schoolmaster could govern a school on such principles. There has been no expression of regret. A Queen—most unhappily for her—can no more confess than a journalist.

No wonder that when the Government came to an end he wrote in his Diary :

To me personally it is a great relief, including in this sensation my painful relations with the Queen who will have a like feeling

It had come to that. He was not the man to expect return for services in personal attachment as something to be bought. He was right on Ireland as he had been on the Eastern Question. He knew full well that he was forcing on the Queen, firmly resolved to shut her eyes to argument, what she detested. Still to him she was the most venerated figure in the world, and at all times he had been true to her and to the Throne. Her refusal to recognise in his policy any call of duty, any vestige of the high motives which should guide the course of a Prime Minister ; and the complete obliteration in her own mind of all that had passed in a long period of friendly and trustful relations, cut him to the heart. The depth of the wound we did not know during his life. Because of his intense, pathetic loyalty he kept silence.

According to his custom on accepting or resigning office, he noted what occurred in a memorandum, dated August 2, 1886, on which no comment is necessary.

The conversation at my closing audience on Friday was a singular one, when regarded as the probable last word with the Sovereign after fifty-four years of political life, and a good quarter of a century's service rendered to her in office.

The Queen was in good spirits ; her manners altogether pleasant. She made me sit at once. Asked after my wife as we began and sent a kind message to her as we ended. About me personally I think her single remark was that I should require some rest I remember that on a closing audience in 1874 she said she felt sure I might be reckoned upon to support the Throne. She did not say anything of the sort to-day. Her mind and opinions have since that day been seriously warped and I respect her for her scrupulous avoidance of anything which could have seemed to indicate a desire on her part to claim any thing in common with me

Only at three points did the conversation touch upon anything even faintly related to public affairs I introduced the subject of Dilke's remaining on the list of the Privy Council, and proposed to send to Salisbury my letter to her with which I knew she agreed So she told me did he . and she approved my sending the letter. The second point was the conclusion of some arrangement for appanages or incomes on behalf of the third generation of the Royal House I agreed that there ought at a suitable time to be a committee on this subject, as had been settled some time back, she observing that the recent circs had made the time unsuitable. I did not offer any suggestion as to the *gros* of the affair, but said it seemed to me possible to draft some plan under which intended marriages should be communicated without a reply from the Houses. Also I agreed that the amounts were not excessive. I did not pretend to have a solution ready . but said it would of course be the duty of the Government to submit a plan to the committee

The third matter was trivial , a question or two from her on the dates and proceedings concerned with the meeting [of Parliament]

The rest of the conversation, not a very long one, was filled up with nothings. It is rather melancholy. But on neither side, given the conditions, could it well be helped.

On the following day she wrote a letter, making it evident that so far as Ireland was concerned she could not trust herself to say what she wanted to say. Poor Ireland. It holds but a small place in her heart

W. E. G. Au. 2/86.

Volume III. ends in December 1885, but I must

follow Mr. Gladstone's records till 1896. Diary entries continue much the same.

July 15, 1892 At the main interview the Queen was certainly polite, in nothing helpful. Not however captious, perfect in temper, not one sympathetic word or any question however detached.

March 8, 1893. Audience of the Queen at 3 30, a form as usual, indeed I fear a sham H. of C $2\frac{1}{2}$ - $7\frac{1}{2}$ (less the audience) and $9\frac{1}{2}$ to $11\frac{1}{2}$. Spoke at both sittings on the main business A bad day

July 10 Audience pure form though over $\frac{1}{2}$ an hour.

There was the same studious politeness. What it concealed is now well known. It was a woman's art, impossible to misunderstand, designed, persistent, remorseless.

Early in 1894 I went to Windsor to be sworn of the Privy Council. The ceremony took place in the small room used by the Queen for audiences and councils. It is approached from the corridor by a rather dark passage. My eye was at once caught by a picture in good light over the entrance door. It was Disraeli. Ah, thought I, as I reflected over the past fourteen years, All ye who enter here, Remember.

“Ibis sub furcam prudens.”

In March 1894, with failing sight and hearing, and in his eighty-sixth year, Mr. Gladstone resigned office.

The final severance from public life had come. It was accepted without regret and with unutterable relief. But the Queen's attitude remained a painful memory. It disquieted him to the end. This is shown by memoranda on the last interview. “It is not wise”, said Lord Rosebery, “to record every word that falls from a great man in retirement. The mind which is accustomed to constant activity and which is suddenly deprived

of employment is an engine without guidance ; the tongue without a purpose is not always under control.”¹ The memoranda were written independently of each other and there is some repetition, perhaps some signs of failing strength. But they are characteristic and indicative of what he felt. They throw a curious light on the Queen’s mood. She wished to limit the last interview as far as possible, yet she wished Mr. Gladstone to know certain things and on others to ascertain his opinion. They are Mr. Gladstone’s last words on the subject and are therefore given in full.

February 28 94. I had an audience of the Queen, for 30 or 35 minutes, to-day : doubtless my last in an official capacity. She had much difficulty in finding topics for an adequate prolongation : but fog, rain and her coming journey to Italy all did their duty and helped. I thought I never saw her looking better. She was at the highest point of her cheerfulness. Her manner was personally kind throughout. She asked about my wife, and about the Rector : also on an occasion which arose about Harry.² To me she said she was sorry *for the cause* which brought about my resignation. She did not however show any curiosity for particulars as to eyes and ears.

I asked whether the day for the journey to Italy was yet fixed. Yes, the Queen said, she was going *on the 13th*, and it could not be later as if it were delayed she would get into Passion week and seemed to anticipate impediments not very intelligible to me. What struck me was the fixity of the day. I had told her that according to present appearances the speech-council might be Saturday and the Prorogation Monday. For how long she asked ? Not longer than a week I apprehended. That however would be till the 12th. From hence I derived the impression, an impression only, and drawn from this part of the conversation that she has at present no idea of anything but a simple and limited reconstruction such as is necessarily consequent upon the retirement of a Prime Minister, and has no idea of resorting to the Tories or Opposition :

¹ *Napoleon. The Last Phase*, p 163

² Mr. Gladstone’s third son.

further that she will not ask any advice from me as to the head. and further still that she will send for Rosebery All this grew out of the almost casual reference by me to the day of departure for Italy It was the only part of the conversation that had any importance

She spoke however of Italy and deplored its condition · did not dissent when I ascribed it mainly to ambition She spoke of Crispi and did not like him of course in horror at his marital proceedings She seemed rather surprised when I said that Cavour was older than I was. She thought the Italians very friendly to us which is true. They have however expectations from us, with or without foundation She returns to London on Monday next.

I said that, if we had the Speech Council on Saturday my definitive letter might go to her on that day

Any fear that the intelligence I had to give would be a shock to her, has been entirely dispelled. Certainly the impression on my mind is that she does not even consider it a trouble, but regards it as the immediate precursor of an arrangement more agreeable.

All this is subject to illustration and modification from the immediate future. Of modification however I do not expect much.

March 3, 1894 As I crossed the quadrangle at 10 20 on my way to St. George's Chapel, I met Sir H Ponsonby who said he was anxious to speak to me about the future. He was much impressed with the movement among a body of members of Parliament against having any Peer for Prime Minister. I signified briefly that I did not think there should be too ready a submission to such a movement. There was not time to say a great deal and I had something serious to say, so we adjourned the conversation till half past eleven, when I should return from St. George's.

He came at that time and opened on the same lines desiring to obtain from me whatever I thought proper to say as to persons in the arrangements for the future I replied to him that this was in my view a most serious matter. All my thoughts on it were absolutely at the command of the Queen And I should be equally at his command if he inquired of me from her and in her name: but that otherwise my lips must be sealed I knew from him that he was in search of information to report to the Queen, but this was a totally different matter.

I entered however freely on the general question of the

movement among a section of the House of Commons I thought it impossible to say at the moment but I should not take for granted that it would be formidable, or regard it as *in limine* disposing of the question Up to a certain point, I thought it a duty to strengthen the hands of our small minority and little knot of Ministers in the Lords by providing these Ministers with such weight as attaches to high office I related to him, but without mentioning any names, the strong resistance which I was obliged to overcome (without any assistance, I might have added) to my giving Ripon the Colonial Office, the Chancellorship of the Duchy being proposed for him instead, to which I would not consent to bring him down. All this, or rather all that touched the main point namely the point of a Peer Prime Minister he without doubt reported.

The Council train came down and I joined the Ministers in the Drawingroom.

I received various messages as to the time when I was to see the Queen, and when it would be most convenient to me I interpret this variety as showing that she was nervous. It ended in fixing the time after the Council and before luncheon I carried in with me a box containing my letter of resignation, and, the Council being over handed, it to her immediately. She asked whether she ought then to read it. I said there was nothing in the letter to require it It repeated my former letter of notice, with the requisite additions.

I must notice what though slight supplied the only incident of any interest in this, perhaps rather memorable audience, which closed a service that would reach to 53 years on Sept. 1, when I was sworn Privy Councillor before the Queen with her swollen face and eyes laudably red When I came into the room and came near to take the seat she has now for some time courteously commanded, I did think she was going to "break down" I do not know how I could be mistaken, it being a matter within my poor powers of vision. But perhaps I was in error. If I was not, at any rate she rallied herself, as I thought, by a prompt effort, and remained collected and at her ease Then came the conversation, which may be called neither here nor there Its only material feature was negative. There was not one syllable on the past: except a repetition, an emphatic repetition, of the thanks she had long ago amply rendered for what I had done, a service of no great merit,

in the matter of the Duke of Coburg and which I assured her would not now escape my notice if occasion should arise. There was the question of eyes and ears, of German *versus* English oculists, she believing in the German as decidedly superior. Some reference to my wife, with whom she had had an interview, and had ended it affectionately, and various nothings. No touch on the subject of the last Ponsonby conversation. Was I wrong in not tendering orally my best wishes? I was afraid that anything said by me should have the appearance of *touting*. A departing servant has some title to offer his hopes and prayers for the future. but a servant is one who has done, or tried to do service in the past. There is in all this a great sincerity. There also seems to be some little mystery as to my own case with her. I saw no sign of embarrassment or pre-occupation. The language of Wednesday's Mem. may stand.

The Empress Frederick was outside in the corridor. She bade me a most kind and warm farewell, which I had done nothing to deserve.

March 10 94. The Queen's note addressed to me on Saturday March 3 is the only *pièce* proceeding from H M in the process which has wound up an account reaching over 52½ years from Sept. 1 1841 when I was sworn of the Privy Council.

There were also three interviews; one on Wednesday Feb 28: one on Friday March 2: and a very short one on Saturday March 3. They add nothing material to the contents of the brief note. On the Wednesday she expressed her regret for the "cause" somewhat emphasised which had brought about the intimation of a probable event then conveyed to her, and at the last on Saturday she had expressed anew, orally, thanks for my efforts in the case of the Duke of Coburg, which had already been given in writing at the time of the little debate in the House of Commons.

Substantially then the proceeding was brief though the interviews were greatly eked out with secondary matter.

The same brevity perhaps prevails in settling a tradesman's bill, when it reaches over many years.

The note says it is not written for the purpose of accepting my resignation as this had been previously done.

But the facts stand thus. There was no tender of resignation made by me until I wrote out at Windsor on

Saturday forenoon the letter in which it was contained It appeared to me to require some [illegible] to length and particularity of statement I put it into a box and carried this box, after the Council, into the small room where the Council meets. I gave it to the Queen and told her it contained my tender of resignation.

(It was at this point that there occurred, if at all, what would have been indeed a circumstance in my rather dry record)

She asked if she need read it before conversing with me I said that rested wholly with Her Majesty Then followed the short conversation . and on retirement I kissed hands Not one word was said of the resignation . and it seems that if it was accepted it was in some way accepted *before* it was tendered.

I did not on retiring, proffer service as I did in writing to the Prince of Wales : for what was my service worth ? Not one syllable proceeded from H M either as to the future or the past. I could not go *touting*.

So late as February 1897 he again adverted to the circumstances of his farewell audience. The speculation it sets forth shows, at least, how deeply to the very close of his life he felt the loss of the Queen's personal regard, and perhaps, I may add, her method of showing it.

Feb 1. 1897. During my latest visit to Windsor Castle, when I resigned my office, an incident happened of no great moment yet of a rather curious interest. *Apropos* of nothing in particular, I was told, I think by Sir Henry Ponsonby, that the Queen had never had any personal attachment to Sir Robert Peel, though she looked upon him with respect and regard. I felt quite certain that this communication, though it grew out of nothing and ended in nothing, was made to me by command. And if by command then why ? Certainly for some reason but what reason ? And this leads out into a curious field, of conjecture I admit, but I think strongly supported conjecture

In the first place the statement certainly did not correspond with the fact , and the Queen in making it was "falsely true ". An opaque medium had risen up in her later experience between the present with its impressions, and the figure of Sir R. Peel.

In contradiction to the statement, there was not only my very strong general recollection, but also the fact of her presenting Sir R. Peel on his retirement in 1846 with portraits of herself and the Prince Consort, a gift which unquestionably indicated something of attachment or friendship, as distinct from mere respect and regard. I do not say that she loved him as she certainly and very justly loved Lord Aberdeen, but that she had towards him an unquestionable sentiment of attachment or friendship. But Mr. Brett¹ in his recently published volume has quoted from a letter of the Queen written soon after the resignation (or death²) of Peel words which are perfectly unequivocal in the sense I have described. So then her statement was "falsely true" she believed it to be true, but it was not so. Her memory is not merely good but admirable, and could not have failed her in this way except under the action of some disturbing cause.

How, then, did the Queen's curious self-delusion come about? And why did she cause it to be made known to me.

I confess it to be my opinion that there are certain contrarieties of character such as to preclude their both being the subject of admiring attachment from persons of intelligence accurately acquainted with them both. Such a contrariety in my opinion existed (but I may be no impartial witness) between Sir Robert Peel and Lord Beaconsfield. And the admiring attachment which the Queen formed to Lord Beaconsfield between 1874 and 1880, so darkened her older sentiment towards Sir Robert Peel that it became incapable of recognition.

But why was the statement made to me? I think out of the compassion due to her general kindness of nature. She was parting from a man well passed eighty, whom she had known for over half a century, who had served her much longer than either of these two remarkable men, and from whom she was on the point of parting, and this not capriciously but without doubt for reasons which seemed to her conclusive, without even the slightest mark to say nothing of the other and higher sentiments of personal respect or regard. Still she might feel for me under the circumstances. She might say for herself "he could not suppose himself qualified to stand as Lord Beaconsfield

¹ Now Lord Esher.

stood in my estimation, but I will give him this comfort that that was a position to which even Sir Robert Peel never attained, and which accordingly he may with less pain forego."

I do not speak lightly when I state my conviction that the circumstances of my farewell, which I think were altogether without parallel, had serious causes, beyond the operation of political disagreements, which no doubt went for something, but which were insufficient to explain them. Statements, whether true or false, must have been carried to her ears, which in her view required (and not merely allowed) the mode of proceeding which was actually adopted.

The final retrospective entry in the Diary on this subject is dated January 2, 1896.

While it is on my mind I place on record here, awaiting some more formal method, my strong desire that after my decease my family shall be most careful to keep in the background all information respecting the personal relations of the Queen and myself during these later years down to 1894, when they died a kind of natural death. Relations rather sad in themselves, though absolutely unattended with the smallest ruffle on their surface. It was the kind and generous farewell from Ponsonby which had to fill for me the place of a farewell from my Sovereign.

I have already shown why we are no longer bound by this inhibition. Mr. Buckle has enriched his *Life of Disraeli* with choice denunciations of Mr. Gladstone by the Queen, and the process is continued in the official publication. He has definitely released us from a sacred obligation.

If proof were needed the evidence of Mr. Gladstone himself demonstrates conclusively that in 1880 the Queen's personal attitude to him had completely changed; that this change was maintained for fifteen years of set purpose; that it was not due either to his personality or to any public events before 1876. Mr. Buckle himself records the first outburst of the Queen against



Photo, W & D Downey

THE RIGHT HON SIR HENRY PONSONBY, LIEUT -GEN. G C B.
Private Secretary to Queen Victoria

him in 1877, and shows in detail how the Queen and Lord Beaconsfield, actuated by a common enmity, endeavoured to prevent him from forming a government in 1880. Mr. Gladstone did not know what we know now of Lord Beaconsfield's persistent and successful efforts to subvert finally the Queen's personal regard for Mr. Gladstone.

The family inhibition was not made because of any expression to us of Mr. Gladstone's views, but solely because he thought that under possible feelings of irritation and impatience we might be tempted to speak rashly on matters which it was his duty not to disclose.

By way of contrast, I may emphasise the fact that from 1868 onwards he met with nothing but unrestricted kindness from the Prince and Princess of Wales. To this there are constant references in the Diary. He went to Sandringham on March 30, 1883: "Reception kinder, if possible than even heretofore". To him the Prince was always considerate, light in hand, interested in conversation. To the Princess he refers on July 15, 1892—"delightful as usual and very sympathetic without direct committals". The kindly friendship of the Prince and Princess certainly softened asperities and did much to help him through troubled waters.

Curiously enough, Mr. Buckle omits, by note or otherwise, to say anything about Sir H. Ponsonby. On January 1, 1881, the Queen wrote in her diary, "I am very anxious, and have no one to lean on". At the moment she must have forgotten her private secretary. To that office he had been appointed in 1870. Behind the scenes he worked quietly and continuously until his death in 1895. Sagacious, of keen insight, patient, understanding, and with a great range

of knowledge, the Queen possessed in him not only a secretary but a counsellor of the highest worth. Of this admirable man Mr. Gladstone had the highest opinion. The Queen's knowledge of leading politicians was often very slight. Excepting Disraeli, and of course Lord Melbourne, the formalism of her manner in personal relations kept her ministers at a distance. Granville tried hard to get through it, but after 1880 he completely failed. Ponsonby had a close, often an intimate, knowledge of all these men. He knew the political currents and the bearings of the questions of the day as well as anybody. He was a mine of information. Courteously impartial, he held the confidence of all politicians, Liberal or Conservative. In discretion he never failed: he was intensely loyal to the Queen.

In Volume III. some interesting letters from and to Sir Henry are published, but Mr. Buckle has given no indication of the great services the Queen's private secretary rendered without the slightest ostentation. If it had not been for the quiet but always most loyal intervention of Sir Henry Ponsonby, serious troubles would have arisen. In his own way he had the most admirable skill in tempering the wind to the shorn lamb. Here is an illustration.

The telegram *en clair* on the fall of Khartoum was construed by everyone as a public censure of the Government by the Queen. Sir Henry, in a letter to Mr. Gladstone's private secretary, said that H.M. had observed "that it contained no censure upon her Ministers, but that it was a deep lament that our efforts to save Gordon *were too late*".

We can judge what happened by Sir Henry's letter to the Queen (p. 603):

General Sir Henry Ponsonby with his humble duty fears he had misled your Majesty to suppose he wrote about the uncyphered telegram in order to calm Mr. Gladstone's private feelings, which it was not his intention to do. He thought that by writing to Mr. Hamilton he could reduce the question to one of minor detail.

Mr Gladstone and Lord Hartington were so grave about it yesterday that Sir Henry Ponsonby was anxious to show it was not intended as a public censure. Mr Gladstone had sent to enquire if the passage had been made known by the telegraph clerks to others, and he evidently wished to bring the matter forward again as a question of whether he could remain in office if publicly condemned by the Queen.

Sir Henry occupied a post of high importance, of extreme delicacy and difficulty. Few, indeed, there are who deserve better of their country. It is to be regretted that Mr. Buckle omitted to refer to the most noteworthy and historic personality of Sir Henry Ponsonby.

I have already dealt with the exceptional severity of the load borne by Mr. Gladstone in the 1880 Parliament. He had to confront the opposition of the Conservatives, the Fourth Party, and the Irish Nationalists. He had also to reckon with the hostility of the Queen. His replies to the Queen's letters are masterly. In a sentence, when demanding information, she would traverse the Government policy on the whole of a great complicated question. In the House of Commons he was admittedly an expert in lucid exposition of complicated detail. His answers to the Queen relatively to what he was asked to reply to, are never long, but state respectfully and clearly essentials in comprehensive terms without the slightest sign of irritation.

It may be of some interest if I give particulars.

We have at Hawarden 577 letters and 241 telegrams from the Queen herself. There are in

addition some 500 letters from Sir Henry Ponsonby, the bulk of them belonging to the period from 1880 onwards. Sir H. Ponsonby constantly brought messages from the Queen. Interviews with him were continual.

LETTERS FROM MR. GLADSTONE TO THE QUEEN

| | |
|-----------------------------------------|-------|
| Total No of letters marked H of Commons | 1210 |
| ", ", ", Cabinet | 750 |
| ", ", ", Honours | 1000 |
| ", ", ", General | 1500 |
| | <hr/> |
| | 4460 |

A comparative table of the Queen's letters and telegrams in Mr. Gladstone's four administrations is not without interest.

| | 1868-74 | 1880-85 | 1886 | 1892-94 |
|-----------|---------|---------|------|---------|
| Letters | 273 | 207 | 26 | 37 |
| Telegrams | 46 | 170 | 11 | 13 |
| | — | — | — | — |
| | 319 | 377 | 37 | 50 |
| | — | — | — | — |

The inversion of the numbers of letters and telegrams in the first and second periods is noticeable. The Queen told Lord Beaconsfield in 1880 that she only saw Mr. Gladstone on official business. Presumably for the same reason in the second period she preferred to telegraph.

In the last period communications are scanty.

The following table shows subject matter of the 1880-85 letters to the Queen. They do not include letters about the formation of the Government or submissions for honours and appointments.

| Subject | 1880 | 1881 | 1882 | 1883 | 1884 | 1885 (to May 8) | Total |
|---------------|------|------|------|------|------|-----------------------|-------|
| Cabinet | 34 | 36 | 56 | 30 | 61 | 30 | 247 |
| Parliamentary | 46 | 127 | 130 | 90 | 110 | 40 | 543 |
| Miscellaneous | | 34 | 77 | 38 | 60 | 18 | 227 |
| | — | — | — | — | — | — | — |
| | 80 | 197 | 263 | 158 | 231 | 88 | 1017 |

Numbers of the Queen's letters had to be submitted to the Cabinet. Many others entailed personal communications with colleagues.

Mr Gladstone's own letters were, of course, in the class of State Papers, and the bulk of them dealt with matters of high importance. They were, therefore, documents which required close and careful drafting. They were all written in his own hand.

Whatever the pressure of public business, or the state of his physical health, the Queen's letters had to be answered without delay.

Throughout Volume III. Mr. Buckle treats Mr Gladstone as a whipping-post. Rarely is anything said to his credit. At the outset he is made to appear as a stump orator who somehow having temporarily deluded the electorate, succeeds to power most selfishly and improperly at a time when Lord Beaconsfield has made everything honourable, peaceful, and easy, and at once proceeds by sheer incapacity, with colleagues as incapable as himself, to put everything into confusion.

Who, from this book, could imagine the facts of the situation in 1880? The Berlin Treaty not fulfilled by the Sultan; war and disaster in Afghanistan; the complications of the Dual Control in Egypt; the Transvaal Boers in acute dissatisfaction; a disordered Zululand; Ireland in a state of peril scarcely less than famine and disease.

The more inveterate Conservative reviewers have acclaimed the book according to the degree of their party bias. A good deal of history seemed to be forgotten. I content myself with one illustration. The *Saturday Review* is of old and responsible standing. The review is over the initials A. A. B.

The five years of Gladstonian Government between 1880 and 1885 are perhaps the most troubled and shameful record in English history. There were the altering of the Oath of Allegiance to admit an atheist to Parliament; the withdrawal from the Transvaal after the defeat of the British troops under Lord Chelmsford, the murder of Lord Frederick Cavendish and Mr Burke in Phoenix Park; the secret intrigues with Irish rebels, particularly the dealings between the Prime Minister and Mrs O'Shea, ending in the release of Parnell from Kilmainham prison, the murder of the British envoy at Cabul, the death of the Prince Imperial, the desertion and murder of General Gordon at Khartoum. These things make a tale of horror which no Englishman can look back upon without a shudder.

This kind of vindictive rubbish was the direct outcome of Volume III. A. A. B. makes seven terrible charges. The five years were, perhaps, the worst in the *whole* of British history! A judgment of that kind required some approach to accuracy.

1. Mr. Gladstone's Government never altered the Oath of Allegiance to admit an atheist. Mr. Gladstone supported the *Affirmation* Bill which permitted affirmation but left the words of the Oath of Allegiance unchanged.

2. Lord Chelmsford was in command when eight hundred men of the 28th Regiment were killed at Isandhlwana in the Zulu War of 1879 under Lord Beaconsfield's Government. Sir George Colley was in command at Majuba. Lord Chelmsford held no command in South Africa under Mr. Gladstone.

3. The evidence at the trial of the *Invincibles* in 1883 proved, if proof were wanted, that there was no connection whatever between the Phoenix Park murders and the liberation of Parnell.

4. In the "secret interviews with rebels" A. A. B. ignores the famous and most secret interview of a Conservative Viceroy with the arch

rebel in the empty house. Captain O'Shea was the intermediary at Kilmainham. As I have shown (p. 296), Mrs. O'Shea had nothing whatever to do with it.

5. The British envoy, Cavagnari, was murdered in 1879, under Lord Beaconsfield's Government!

6. The Prince Imperial was killed in 1879 in the Zulu War, under Lord Beaconsfield's Government!

7. The charge of "desertion and murder" of Gordon is false in fact.

Of these statements three are matters of opinion; four are assertions of facts which are untrue. It only remains to assess the value of opinion which depends on such a foundation.

How in the world could such sorry stuff pass the shrewd eye of the editor! The *Saturday Review* has thus convicted Lord Beaconsfield beyond redemption of being himself guilty of horrific sins attributed to Mr. Gladstone.¹

A large number of articles and reviews were in the like spirit but short of this egregious inaccuracy.

I am only concerned here with the political aspect of Volume III. On the Eastern Question and Ireland in particular it misleads opinion. The political position in 1880 as presented conceals the truth. In almost every direction Mr. Gladstone inherited from Lord Beaconsfield a legacy of trouble. Deficits at the Exchequer, difficulties in Ireland, India, South Africa, Egypt, and Constantinople. It was an accumulation of menacing dangers. Mr. Gladstone had not sown the wind, but he had to reap the whirlwind.

¹ The editor of the *Saturday Review* is Mr. A. A. Bauman, formerly a Conservative M.P.

CHAPTER II

(1) THE PLOT THAT FAILED

“ I was a Thessalian gentleman, who, by mischance, having killed a favourite of the prince of that country, was pursued so cruelly that in no place but by favour or corruption they would obtain my destruction ”

—SIDNEY.

IN April 1880 certain letters which passed between the Queen and Lord Beaconsfield are omitted from Volume III. It is unfortunate, but the reason is intelligible. They were thought to be appropriate to the *Life of Disraeli*. These letters are essential to a full understanding of what was going on behind the scenes. Comparatively few people have the money and the time to buy and read the six volumes of the Disraeli biography, interesting as they are. Therefore I make no apology for treating these letters as though they were in the volume to which they properly belong.

Lord Beaconsfield finally left Downing Street on April 24, 1880. For five days he had done his best, in concert with the Queen, to prevent the accession of Mr. Gladstone to office. For that purpose the Queen eagerly sought and was promptly given his advice.

Queen Victoria to Lord Beaconsfield

April 9, 1880 . . . When we correspond—which I hope we shall on many a *private* subject and without everyone being astonished or offended, and even more without any

one knowing about it—I hope it will be in this more easy form. You can be of such use to me about my family and other things and about great public questions. My great hope and belief is that this shamefully heterogeneous union—out of mere folly—will separate into many parts very soon, and that the Conservatives will come in stronger than ever in a short time. Possibly a coalition first. But you must promise me for the country's as well as for my sake, to be very watchful and very severe, and to allow no lowering of Gt. Britain's proud position! It must not be lowered. The Army and Navy *not* diminished, and I look to you for that. Give me that firm promise. I do not care for the trouble of changes of Govt. if it is to have a secure and safe one, which the new one cannot be. I am shocked and ashamed at what has happened. It is really disgraceful.

Of course I shall not take any notice of . . . [epithet omitted] Mr Gladstone who has done so much mischief. It is most essential that *that* should be known, and that is why I cyphered to you.¹

Memorandum by Queen Victoria²

WINDSOR CASTLE. April 18, 1880. I saw Lord Beaconsfield this morning . . . he (Lord Beaconsfield) could tell me something which he thought more hopeful for the future, viz., that tho' some dreadful people like Bradlaugh had been elected, a great many of the respectable and moderate old Whigs had also been. There were 200 of them, he thought, and 240 of the Conservatives—a very compact and united body—returned while the Home Rulers and Radicals only amounted to 190. By calling upon a Whig to form a Government, those moderate Liberals would rally round and support him, and the Radicals would be harmless. . . . I repeated what I had written, viz. that this was no ordinary change of Government, but had been brought about by the most unjust and shameful persecutions of Mr. Gladstone.

A remarkable phrase. Presumably it is intended to mean that Mr. Gladstone unjustly and shamefully persecuted Lord Beaconsfield. The

¹ *Life of Disraeli*, vol. vi pp. 527-8.

² *Ibid* p. 534.

electors, taking another view, had given a great majority to the persecutor.

On April 21 Lord Beaconsfield wrote to the Queen that "he is informed that the Whigs in the new Parliament amount to 287. Lord Hartington must be aware of this." Lord Hartington, of course, brushed aside Lord Beaconsfield's fantastic figures. As Mr. Gladstone would not serve under him, he declined to form a government.

Lord Beaconsfield to Queen Victoria

DOWNING STREET, April 23, 1880 Lord Beaconsfield with his humble duty returns to your Majesty one of the most interesting State papers that he has ever perused He has entire confidence, at this moment of terrible trial, in your Majesty's courage and wisdom

[*Same date*] . . . If the leaders of the Opposition shrink from the responsibility of their position, and confess their inability to form a Ministry, your Majesty should fix them with the responsibility of advising your Majesty to send for Mr Gladstone

If he have an audience, your Majesty should say :

"The Opposition having succeeded in defeating my Government, I have, in the spirit of the Constitution, sent for their leaders, who have confessed their inability to form a Ministry, and have advised me to send for you I wish therefore to know, whether you are prepared to form an Administration ? "

Lord Beaconsfield would advise your Majesty, in the first instance, to confine yourself to this question Mr Gladstone will, probably, be diffuse in his reply, which will give your Majesty advantage in ascertaining his real intentions

If he be not diffuse, then your Majesty, if he replies in the affirmative, may proceed to enquire as to the policy he recommends, and the persons he will propose to carry it into effect . . . This is his last day in Downing Street

To encourage the Queen in her effort to keep out Mr. Gladstone, Lord Beaconsfield told her that Hartington would have the support of 200

respectable Whigs. On further information he tells her the exact number was 237! No office boy in the Conservative Central Association could possibly have given figures so grotesquely untrue. Lord Beaconsfield had been blind to the movements of opinion before the General Election and seemingly was quite ignorant of its results. Self-deception? Who invented the figures I know not, but they were obviously given for a definite purpose. Lord Beaconsfield had nearly quadrupled the true number, which was about sixty.

Mr. Buckle says that "he would be a case-hardened Constitutional who in this matter would refuse his sympathy with a widowed Queen."¹ My sense of chivalry is somewhat strained when I am asked for sympathy with the Queen in the terrible trial of sending for Mr. Gladstone. Lord Beaconsfield, however, was a man, and a Prime Minister who knew the constitutional practice. For him there is not the slightest excuse. It might at least be thought that his sense of chivalry would impel him to save the Queen not only from her own error but from very serious risk.

Yet without hesitation he eagerly encouraged the Queen in her unconstitutional action—action which, if known, as Mr. Buckle observes, would have caused "ministerial resentment and public scandal".

It was, he adds, Lord Beaconsfield's "prudence and discretion" which kept the matter secret. Mr. Buckle's hero, the real author of the situation, is made to shine even in error. Odd that Mr. Buckle should claim merit for concealment of so parlous a personal position.

¹ *Life of Disraeli*, vol. vi p 542

(2) THE COUNTY FRANCHISE CRISIS

Under ill-omened conditions Mr. Gladstone began his second administration. The Queen continued to communicate secretly with her ex-Prime Minister for the purpose of preventing her Prime Minister doing things they disliked.

I have already given my impressions of the Parliament of 1880-85, and the leading events with which it was chiefly concerned. The Queen's persistent denunciations of almost everything which Mr. Gladstone did were now due to a marked personal antipathy, and it is best, as far as possible, to pass them by in silence. Two or three matters, however, call for notice.

Mr. Buckle gives to readers a wrong impression over the constitutional issues in 1884-85. From the notes and letters in Volume III. the suggestion is that the Queen intervened alone and successfully to avert a crisis produced by Mr. Gladstone's wrong handling of the County Franchise question. It is so far from the truth that I must give the facts of the case.

It will be remembered that the Franchise Bill, having passed the Commons, was hung up by the House of Lords unless and until redistribution was tacked on to it. It was not an unreasonable action. But extremists on both sides used language calculated to divert the main issue from the Bill to the constitutional power of the House of Lords. The Liberals were rightly determined to pass their Bill. The fighting Liberals in the country rejoiced at the prospect of a combat on the constitutional issue. The cooler and more responsible heads, provided that the passing of the Bill was secured, wished for a fair settlement. The Cabinet had launched their Bill without any intention of raising the constitutional issue. That

they might have anticipated the attitude of the Conservatives is, I agree, a sound criticism.

In Volume III. almost all the letters and extracts convey the idea that the situation was only saved by the intervention of the Queen. That appears to be the conclusion of most of those who have expressed their opinions in public on the volume. I state the facts.

Early in July the House of Lords suspended the Franchise Bill. There were interviews between party leaders of both sides without result. Things became hot in the country.

The Queen, in writing to Mr. Gladstone, strongly censured Mr Chamberlain and the " wild men ". She was not influenced by Mr. Gladstone's pledge that the Cabinet would exert itself to terminate the crisis. She believed that the House of Lords represented the true feeling of the country. In that sense she wrote to the Duke of Argyll on July 17, begging him to urge Mr. Gladstone to surrender to the House of Lords. The Duke found him reasonable and not extreme. He was in fact adamant against allowing the House of Lords to force a dissolution. Provided the Franchise Bill was passed, he was ready to accept any reasonable arrangement on redistribution satisfactory to the Conservatives.

The Queen in August was in hot wrath with the Government and complained bitterly of Mr. Chamberlain's speeches.

Oddly enough, the first prominent person to stand up in the House of Commons for a settlement was Randolph Churchill. I have this note in my diary :

July 11, 1884. R Churchill made first a violent and gross attack on the Gt —then at the end apologised and made a most wise and excellent speech calling on the Tories to come to terms. After all this badgering P.M. attends

80 Club and makes a splendid noble speech which delighted the 200 men who dined.

This speech shows clearly the mood and spirit in which he was determined to handle this contentious question. He said—I quote from *The Times*—

We who are bound by special restraints, shall certainly endeavour to avoid the raising of any ulterior question for organic change until and unless, which God forbid, experience should finally prove that a hard and irresistible necessity compels it to be raised. . . . It is our desire to see it [the Franchise Bill] win its way by persuasion and calm consideration, to the rational minds of men

Could calmer words have been addressed to an audience of keen and militant young men? This was *before* the Queen wrote to the Duke of Argyll.

Here is just a side light. The Queen wrote to Mr. Gladstone on July 24 about “violent contemptuous language” which was being used against the House of Lords.

Mr Gladstone must feel that language coming from the son of the Prime Minister *must* be and *will* be considered by the masses as inspired by *his father*

On reading this, with some consternation I referred to my diary.

July 19, 1884 Off to Leeds at 10 Spontaneous meeting in Victoria Square at 4 of about 15,000 enthusiastic men Short speeches to the point Did my best to modify the rage *v.* the Lords urging concentration on the Franchise Bill in the first instance

My consternation diminished.

At the time I spoke at several meetings in the country. The Queen, from lack of sound information, was quite wrong in thinking that even the “wild men” of the party were exciting the masses. The temper of the “masses” was defin-

itely dangerous, and their views were far in advance of the Liberals in the House of Commons. It was a very difficult task to control them. If Mr. Gladstone for one moment had slackened in his determination to pass the Bill without a dissolution, disturbances and riots would certainly have followed. As it was, there was an ugly scene at Aston, near Birmingham.

All this time, while he stood to his guns against the Lords, he was working to keep the extreme men in the party from diverting the issue from the Bill to the House of Lords itself. The Queen disliked the Franchise Bill. This became known, and caused ill-feeling. There was a mass Reform demonstration in Hyde Park. An immense procession passed along Whitehall. It was noticed that the Prince of Wales occupied a prominent position in a balcony. His suggestive presence was much appreciated.

On August 25 Mr. Gladstone sent a long and considered memorandum to Sir H. Ponsonby (Vol. III., p. 531). The Queen, who up to this time had done nothing beyond writing to the Duke of Argyll, was "greatly struck by the fairness and impartiality of the Memorandum". *But it was not till September 14 that she began to make serious efforts to bring the Conservatives to reason.*

I have shown how Mr. Gladstone worked to keep the constitutional question out of the franchise controversy; and how, by his fair and impartial memorandum, he had not only impressed the Queen, but induced her to make efforts to modify the extreme action of the Conservative leaders.

Mr. Gladstone from the first had laboured, and successfully, to keep his party from extreme courses. The Government was anxious for a settlement which Lord Salisbury and some of his leading colleagues declined to accept. The Queen

had to intervene, but not because there was any reluctance or shortcoming on Mr. Gladstone's part. Lord Salisbury was not only opposed to an agreement. He appeared to be in favour of bringing on the constitutional issue. The Queen became seriously alarmed. She now began personal appeals to her own friends—that is to say, the leading Conservatives, who were opposed to her ministers.

Yet in a letter to the Duke of Argyll on October 7, she breaks out against Mr. Gladstone, accusing him of attacking the House of Lords. It was precisely what he had not done. This letter is wholly irreconcilable, not only with Mr. Gladstone's memorandum but with her own expression of opinion on it. It must be regretfully admitted that when writing about him, her impartiality and accuracy were not to be relied upon. The fact remains that Mr. Gladstone from first to last used all his influence to restrain the advanced section in the country. Liberalism in those days was all-embracing in its catholicity, but there were socialists and intransigents outside the party organisation. Nevertheless Mr. Gladstone's moderating influence was completely successful. Of this there is no indication in the Queen's letters, or in the Editor's Note.

Not till October 17 did the Queen open communications with Lord Salisbury. From that date—late enough in the day—she made vigorous efforts to induce the Conservative leaders to agree to a settlement. The Government were perfectly ready to agree and no pressure whatever on them was necessary. Negotiations continued. On November 27 Mr. Gladstone telegraphed to her that all points of importance were settled. On that day the Queen saw Lord Salisbury. She wrote that he "seemed rather de-

pressed and not exactly pleased at this practical settlement".

In short, the Queen took a one-sided view against the Government *until* she was struck, on August 26, by Mr. Gladstone's fairness and impartiality. She then modified her views, and finally used her personal authority to induce Lord Salisbury to give way. Her action in this was appreciated by the whole country.

To sum up. Throughout the crisis it was generally known and accepted that Mr. Gladstone was the moderating influence which controlled the advanced Liberal section.

With all respect the Queen's views of the nature of Mr. Gladstone's speeches cannot be accepted as correct. She did not read them herself. She disliked the Franchise Bill. She thought that the House of Lords was right in its opposition. She wrote to the Duke of Argyll because she wished the Government to surrender.

The idea of working for an agreement by mutual concessions was first suggested to her by Mr. Gladstone's memorandum of August 25. She thought it fair and impartial. On September 14 she began to use her influence on the Conservatives. The strength of her arguments lay in the fairness and impartiality of Mr. Gladstone, and she succeeded. She had rendered invaluable service. But it was Mr. Gladstone who had worked throughout for a fair settlement and stood out against all the extremists in the country. Of all this Mr. Buckle, *more suo*, says and shows nothing

(3) MR. GLADSTONE'S ESCAPADE

After the session of 1883 we got Mr. Gladstone away from the growls and grumbles of political life into the freedom of the seas. The *Pembroke*

Castle, of about 4000 tons—quite a big ship in those days—was a fine boat, designed according to Admiralty requirements for cruising work and a light armament. Donald Currie, a born master of shipping enterprise, was an admirable host. He had assembled a delightful party—Mr. and Mrs. Gladstone, Tennyson, Hallam Tennyson, Laura Tennant (afterwards Mrs. Alfred Lyttelton), Mary Drew, Algernon West, Sir Andrew Clark, and others.

After the cruise was over we made a presentation of plate to the ship's officers, and also to Sir Donald Currie. Tennyson, by request, wrote these lines for engravement :

Grateful guests to gracious host,
To and from the Danish coast

Facts very concisely stated—perhaps at the cost of poetry.

Everything went well. At Copenhagen, by a pure accident, we met an extraordinary assembly of royalties, including six crowned heads.¹ We never saw the thunder-cloud over our heads. It was a private affair, a biographical incident, history was unruffled. Mr. Buckle, however, raises it to State importance in pp. 439-444. Perhaps his sense of humour led him to sacrifice valuable space. Or his want of it?

Our intention was, via the Hebrides, to circumnavigate the country and disembark at London. When off Cape Wrath, with the weather fine and settled, Mr. Gladstone, away from school, was enjoying himself thoroughly and was engrossed in congenial company and free and enjoyable intercourse with friends, we unanimously jumped at Donald Currie's proposal to extend our trip to the Orkneys, the Norwegian coast, and

¹ See Appendix VI.

Copenhagen. It must be admitted that Mr. Gladstone forgot in these circumstances to ask leave to be permitted for a few days to go outside territorial waters. Every one of the large party was *particeps criminis*. We were guilelessly forgetful—not excluding the Poet Laureate himself.

Our sin has found us out after forty-four years. The Queen could not wait for the return of Mr. Gladstone. She must censure the captain through the first lieutenant. So she expressed to Lord Granville "her unfeigned astonishment at Mr. Gladstone's want of all knowledge apparently of what is due to the Sovereign he serves". The Queen perhaps on this occasion was unnecessarily nervous about his want of prudence in speech! "The Prime Minister—and especially one *not* gifted with prudence in speech—is not", so the Queen wrote to Lord Granville, "a person who can go about *where* he likes with impunity." However great may have been the lack of prudence which the Queen assumed, we may fairly think that he was competent to deal with any insidious designs against Great Britain revealed to him by the Emperor of Russia and the Kings of Denmark and Greece. But he was as little likely to discuss politics with these august personages at Copenhagen as a schoolboy on holiday, when meeting one of his schoolmasters, would be to discuss the text of Aeschylus. Of all the Queen's Prime Ministers the greatest stickler for constitutional and ceremonial observances, Mr. Gladstone had failed to observe a custom more out of date than the crinoline. The royal lash fell unmercifully, but Mr. Gladstone bore it with a smile.

The Queen could see nothing right in his actions and motives. Two more examples will suffice.

The Queen was at Balmoral in June 1885, and on the 9th a ministerial crisis arose on the defeat of the Government. The end had come, and Mr. Gladstone was engrossed in meeting Lord Salisbury's difficulties in taking office, in preparing honours lists, and in winding up the infinite number of details which have to be settled before a Prime Minister and his secretarial staff leave the official residence. The Queen requested him to come to Balmoral. Because of the Ascot races it appears that it was not possible for her to be at Windsor before their termination.

But for the pressure of work, two night journeys in succession and his age—seventy-six—would not have deterred him from obeying the royal command. The Queen expressed her views by an entry in her diary :

BALMORAL, 9th June 1885 . . . Had a telegram from Mr. Gladstone saying he had not much more to say, and wished to avoid the journey, his opinion best given from London, time and attention required in evacuating his house !

Now why does Mr. Buckle publish this quite uncalled-for innuendo ? The implication is that Mr. Gladstone made the inconsiderable trouble of going from one house to another a reason for disobeying the Queen's wishes. Though the point is ridiculously small, the sting in the Queen's note of exclamation is barbed, and Mr. Buckle goes out of his way to drive it in.

Yet he was perfectly cognisant of the facts apart from the strain of two successive night journeys.

Had he not, in the biography, quoted Lord Beaconsfield's letter to Lady Bradford on April 8, 1880 ?

I have nothing to say : a most dreary life and labour mine ! Winding up a Government as hard work as forming

one, without any of its excitement. My room is filled with beggars, mournful or indignant, and my desk covered with letters like a snowstorm.

Mr. Gladstone's time was not less occupied, though he was not victimised by party beggars.

Again, why did Mr. Buckle publish the Wolseley correspondence? This is my last observation up to the change of government in 1885.

The Queen's letters to Lady Wolseley (March 3, 1885), and to Lord Wolseley (March 31) were secret, and she asked the recipients to destroy them.

The authors of the *Life of Lord Wolseley* wrote this significant letter to *The Times*:

SIR,

In the latest volume of the *Letters of Queen Victoria* there appear important letters from her Majesty to Lord and Lady Wolseley, ending with a request to the recipients that the letters should be destroyed.

Suggestions have come to our notice that there has been some breach of confidence, and we, as the biographers of Lord Wolseley, think it should be known that there is no trace of the letters in question among Lord Wolseley's papers, and that these published were from copies which her Majesty retained.

We are, etc.

F. MAURICE
GEORGE ARTHUR.

Feb 29, 1928.

To this Mr. Buckle made no reply. The Queen evidently had kept copies. There is only one explanation of his remarkable neglect of the Queen's own instruction. Publication was obviously not to the advantage either of the Queen or Lord Wolseley. But nothing mattered to the impartial editor so long as he was able to publish something derogatory to Mr. Gladstone. It is surprising that Mr. Buckle's sense of loyalty

to the Queen did not restrain him from the inclusion of these letters.

The Queen secretly incites Lord Wolseley to use strong language to Mr. Gladstone and even "THREATEN" to resign if he did not act as she wished. This to a general officer commanding a British army in the field encompassed with great and perplexing difficulties.

I pay no attention to Lord Wolseley's letter beyond an absolute denial of his assertion that Mr. Gladstone and all his colleagues "have completely ignored all the toil they [the soldiers in the Soudan] endured without a murmur on the river, all the fatiguing marches under a burning sun in the desert, and all the severe fighting they have had".

Wolseley must have known from experience that what he said was untrue. No one was quicker than Mr. Gladstone to appreciate the valour of British soldiers in the field. Wolseley had fresh in his mind the notable eulogy of him and his troops spoken after Tel-el-Kebir in the House of Commons.

At the very time he wrote to the Queen he had *received* Lord Hartington's appreciative telegram on behalf of the Government (see p. 606) with special reference to Sir Charles Wilson's remarkable services! There is no explanatory footnote by the Editor.

It is interesting to collate Wolseley's more than unfounded complaint with the curious censure by the Queen, conveyed (p. 605) by Sir H. Ponsonby's telegram to Hartington on February 13.

Queen observes it is quite irregular that Government should publicly express commendation of officers conduct

The Queen's view was that the proper channel for appreciative messages to the Army was herself.

CHAPTER III

FINALE

IN a strain of musing regret I reflect on the Queen's inveterate hostility to Mr. Gladstone during the closing period of his life. The condemnatory words and phrases could have been written only by a woman, and that woman a queen. Yet the fact of sex did not, could not diminish either the Queen's responsibility or the right of the lieges to demand impartiality in her judgments. Sex gave her great advantages over all her ministers, save one. Like Solomon, Lord Beaconsfield captivated a queen.

I have already stated, and must here recall that on the authority of the Queen's letters to Mr. Gladstone and on his personal statements to me, his relations with the Queen were good up to 1874.

The change came in 1876. In his Eastern policy the Queen could only see a personal and vindictive attack on Lord Beaconsfield. She describes it in a memorandum dated April 18, 1880. "This was no ordinary change of Government but had been brought about by the most unjust and shameful persecutions of [*sic*] Mr. Gladstone."¹ Previously, in her letters and comments her language had invariably been courteous and gracious. Suddenly the flames flashed out, and in February 1877 she refers to his wildness, folly, and fury. From that

¹ *Life of Disraeli*, vi p. 535.

time onwards, because he counterworked the policy of Lord Beaconsfield which she had made her own, she neither forgot nor forgave. It is of small account in the run of the nation. The Queen's hostility was temperamental. It did not stop Mr. Gladstone any more than it provoked him to wrath. The Government, Parliament, and the electorate took their several courses. So far as he was concerned, Mr. Gladstone took good care that no harm should befall the Crown. So far as the Queen is concerned I may be pardoned for thinking her attitude to have been a weakness and a misfortune.

In the next publication of the Queen's Letters we may expect renewed condemnation of Mr. Gladstone in his work for Home Rule. In anticipation I must say a few words.

His policy was fought by the Conservatives for ten years as something not only unnecessary, foolish, and disloyal, but intrinsically pernicious and destructive. For ten years he was held up to public scorn as the "old man in a hurry" to dismember the Empire.

Reluctantly the Conservatives are now being forced to admit that, after all, he was right. A few still attempt to justify old errors on the ground that his Bills were impossible. Why? What would the Queen and the Conservatives have said if in 1886 he had brought in a Bill on the lines of the Coalition Treaty of 1921! But then it may be said Mr. Gladstone included Ulster. Let me quote from the review of Volume III. in the *Spectator* of January 21, 1927:

Mr Gladstone of course failed to carry his Bill, but if he had carried that comparatively moderate measure the Irish question would probably have been settled years before it was. We admit that the loyalists of the North had the right to stand out from Home Rule, but they could have

established their claim not less easily than than they did thirty years later *Some of us make this admission to-day with humility* [The italics are mine.]

I have finished with these old contentions. But has the public? I have of course read the Queen's letters to Mr. Gladstone up to the time of his final retirement in 1894. Here and there, as in previous years, letters relating to family bereavements, Mr. Gladstone's action on the finances of the Royal Family, and some non-political topics have a softer, almost a friendly tone. But there is no change in the deep-rooted hostility. Are there to be further instalments of personal attack? The letters throw no new or even interesting light on the Irish question. Every day after 1885 antagonism to Home Rule more and more pales its ineffectual fires as the fateful dawn of 1920 approaches. Is it worth while to follow this rather ignoble trail of a long-lost cause? Mr. Buckle may resume his editorial task. If so, I suggest that he might publish one letter, and say with brevity and absolute truth, *ex uno discere omnes*.

The fame of Queen Victoria will not rest upon the accuracy or the effect of her views on foreign affairs. Because great and remarkably accurate as was her knowledge of events, it did not include the deeper and determining forces of humanity in broad aspect. She never escaped from the old ideas which sought to limit directing powers and influences in foreign affairs to reigning personages and dynastic interests. Like many sovereigns, her views were governed by tradition, family relationships, and personal preferences or repulsions. In considering the whole sixty-three years of her reign it is not possible to see where she exercised at any time a clear, leading influence due to principles or reasoning; or to any special

vision below the surface of things, in that region where lie human thought and aspiration and evolutionary movements in the collective mind of a nation. The Queen accepted the old traditional policy of friendship with the Turk, and its corollary, opposition or hostility to Russia ; and she never changed. In this mood Lord Beaconsfield, for his Eastern policy, found congenial soil.

From family connection the Queen was devoted to Germany. But again the personal influence of the Crown Princess of Germany made her detest Bismarck. Friendship with Germany always made her suspicious of France, and this feeling definitely turned to dislike after the establishment of the Republic. With the curious conflict in her mind over Eastern Roumelia I deal later. By these considerations, either personal or traditional, her views on foreign policy were continually influenced.

Nor will the Queen's fame rest on any guidance she gave to her ministers in their attitude to the classes and masses in the social and economic contests after the Reform Act of 1832.

From the Act of Union, Ireland through the century was the one perennial source of trouble and danger. The Queen accepted the traditional policy, and adhered to it without the slightest doubt or hesitation. She did not really like any and disliked most of Mr. Gladstone's Irish legislation before 1886. She signed, and seemed always to welcome, the steady procession of Coercion Acts. She opposed all efforts at the true solution with exceeding bitterness. She had no sympathy with Reform Acts. She approved of petitions to the Sovereign, but organised demands by the people in Parliament for the improvement of their own position she looked upon with disfavour. Again and again after 1868 she urged her ministers

not to make promises, never to commit themselves to anything—an injunction which every Liberal and Conservative statesman in active life had to ignore.

Who can blame the Queen? Prince Albert and Lord Beaconsfield alike had made her believe that continuity of high responsibility gave her knowledge and experience to which no passing minister could attain. This she firmly and honestly believed. But in fact this continuity on the heights cut her off from all opportunity of personal contact with the ideas of the people, and relieved her from the necessity of ever going to the roots of big questions by reason and argument. Politicians had to fight these things out in principle and detail on the platform, in the press, and in the House of Commons. They were in the continuity, not of the Throne, but of arduous public life. Their battles on national problems persisted for years, often for generations. Discussion and inquiry produced stages in their minds and in the minds of the people, which were steps to progress. Continuity such as the Queen experienced, was a great disadvantage because in its constitutional irresponsibility it was "out" of touch with forward movements. Those who are neither responsible actors nor students never undergo the grinding toil essential to the real understanding of difficult questions and problems, whether on foreign or home affairs. So of necessity was it in the case of the Queen. On a change of government, the Prime Minister would disclose his policy in formulae on foreign affairs or projected Bills to the Queen, whose knowledge was confined to generalities and whose lofty isolation kept her apart from the all-essential dynamics of politics.

The Queen's greatness lay in her character, her

clearness of mind, her extraordinary strength of will, her wonderful memory, her supreme honesty of purpose, her unfailing sense of duty, her devotion to her country, her genuine kindness, her noble domestic life. Her character was the great reality which secured personal devotion. With her unsurpassable dignity and diligence, for sixty-three years she was intimately associated with the ever-advancing greatness of the British Empire. In comparison it is of small moment that her judgment on public affairs was not always sound, that she had a share of human weakness.

From 1838 to 1901 the affairs of the country were transacted by the Queen's ministers, wisely or unwisely, according to the best of their knowledge and powers. Throughout stands the personality of the Queen, rising in interest even at the most difficult periods ; even when in emphatic disagreement with her advisers. If she did not guide politics, she could and did very often guide decisions. Her clear objective mind often looked through and beyond the fog of difficulties which it was not her business to see, when it sometimes obscured the vision of her advisers.

She was at all times The Queen. Going through many reviews of the volume I was arrested by the words of Arthur Ponsonby¹ from his own knowledge and experience :

Her kindness and attention to humble people, and more especially to children, was particularly charming because it was never marred by any trace of stooping patronage. Never was any one so sure of her position. Her quiet assurance combined with her long experience gave her an extraordinary distinction of manner and bearing which her looks and size would otherwise have failed to convey. The soft-hearted, motherly and rather sentimental woman was reserved for family and a very few intimate friends, and woe

¹ *Manchester Guardian*, January 28, 1928.

betide any unqualified person who attempted to take advantage of her sympathetic kindness! When before a Drawing Room at Buckingham Palace she sailed into the anteroom where all the princes and princesses were assembled waiting, the raucous murmur of conversation would suddenly cease, and amid silence the Queen, with firmness in every step and confidence in every gesture, would say the few necessary words and pass out at the head of the procession to the Throne room. There was never any apologetic hesitancy nor was there any clumsy pomposity. She knew she was number one in England and that England was number one among the nations, and that is exactly what she managed to convey to those who came in her path.

This true and authoritative appreciation presents what is the general sense of most people, and it is in their hearts. In the selection of letters Mr. Buckle's work is open to serious criticism, but the abiding fame of Queen Victoria rests on a far wider and surer foundation than that suggested by Volume III.

Only one general aspect of Mr. Gladstone's relations to the Queen remains. I cannot omit it because of many erroneous comments in the reviews of Volume III.

In brief the Queen is represented as the Constitutional Sovereign making a gallant and effective stand not only against revolutionary extremists, but against popular doctrines held by the party led by Mr. Gladstone, which were dangerous alike to the Crown, the Constitution, and to the well-being of the country. It was therefore obligatory on the Queen herself to restrain Mr. Gladstone. The volume throws not a single beam of light on the true attitude of Mr. Gladstone himself as leader of Liberal opinion.

I remember walking away from the House one day with Haldane when Mr. Gladstone was still in office. It must have been, I think, in 1898. We were talking of the advance of democracy abroad,

and how less marked the advance was in England. "But when Mr. G. retires," I asked, "what will happen?" "Then the deluge," said Haldane. The waters rose steadily, though checked by the Boer War, and the arrangement in 1903 between Liberalism and Labour which held good for the next eleven years. The war and the coupon election in 1918 gave Labour its opportunity, and the first Labour Government was formed in 1924. Up to Mr. Gladstone's resignation independent Labour organisation was limited to a group of irreconcilables in the country represented solely by Mr. Keir Hardie in the House of Commons. Socialism prospered on the Continent, particularly in Germany, but not in England. Yet it was the German regime, its imperialism and militarism, which seemed to the Queen such a pleasing contrast with the international spirit which so largely influenced Liberal and particularly Mr. Gladstone's foreign policy.

Nevertheless, democratic ideals had, in as strong but in a more practical way, taken hold of the people from 1867 onwards. In Germany tendencies, turbulent and anti-monarchical, were held down by Bismarckian force and the autocracy of William II. With what results we know.

In England democratic progress was orderly and loyal, seeking practical results by constitutional methods. From the four years' shock of the Great War, monarchy in Great Britain emerged unshaken. It passed unscathed the test of a Labour Government. England remains to this day strongly monarchist, while thrones have fallen in Europe. Why is it so? Why this extraordinary contrast between democratic movements abroad and at home?

When democracy gained political power wages were scanty, families were herded in squalid, in-

sanitary houses, the everyday life of the people was hard, sombre, and joyless. Conditions existed which elsewhere provided disorder and violence. Not so in England.

In continental countries and notably in Germany there was no effective Liberal party seeking redress and progress by appeals to reason, by efforts which secured power for necessary reforms.

In England the most powerful party up to 1867 were the Whigs, the forerunners and predecessors of the Liberals. Mr. Gladstone's Government of 1868 was a government of progressive Whigs, inspired by his own ideas, which established Liberalism as the new force and organisation necessary for the wants and aspirations of the people. In 1868 arose that personal influence which, subject to the ups and downs of political life, ended only with his death in 1898. He saw and had to reckon with the steady, inevitable rise of the democratic flood. Canute, according to the ancient legend, pointed the moral of the rising tide at Southampton nine hundred years ago. What followed? The rising tide, being resistless, must be used. In the course of centuries there came training walls, lighthouses, great dredgers, and where Canute sat huge docks and warehouses. Mighty ships come to and fro. The tide at its flood is used to increase the greatness and prosperity of the country. So it was with the democracy.

By effort and labour Mr. Gladstone showed to the masses what could be done by legislation and administration for the good of the people. He secured their confidence. Again and again the Liberals won electoral triumphs by the vote of men inspired by hope and trained to orderly constitutional and loyal ideas and methods. Liberalism reacted on Conservatism, and sug-

gested the plan of Tory democracy. Gradually all parties realised more or less the necessities of the people and their right to redress. What might have been a revolution became a steady upward movement in the social and economic conditions of the people. It was a movement scarcely hindered by the lesser matters of party contentions. Through thirty years Mr. Gladstone's hand was on the helm of democracy. It was the guiding, steady force. Had he retired from public life in 1875 most Conservatives, many Whigs, and some shrewd Socialists would have rejoiced. What would have happened, for example, in the period of the County Franchise agitation? Perhaps Chamberlain and Dilke and even the guileless Mundella might have hardened into republicanism. Could Hartington have restrained the masses rising in wrath against the House of Lords? Who would have held in check the passions of Irish Nationalism? What could have stopped the immediate formation of a Labour party, untrained in constitutional practices, in the practical advantages of the monarchy, in the respect that was due to the Queen?

Throughout this period we see the figure of one man. At one time there was also Beaconsfield, at another Rosebery, at another Salisbury. But there is only one figure in political life and action which stands out through the period in its entirety. When Mr. Gladstone died the Throne remained on the secure foundation of respect and loyalty.

His first administration was the practical result of new-born popular power in the boroughs. He had won the confidence of the democracy and he never lost it. Throughout, he stood as the break-water between the Throne and those who sought or might have sought to menace it. Formidable

waves dashed against it from his own followers. Where the Throne and the Constitution were concerned there never was hesitation or compromise. The barrier was impenetrable.

Is it fair or right to forget this? It was not forgotten by Conservative Governments on many occasions.

Parliament had often to be asked in Victorian days to make provision for members of the royal family. These special votes have long ago given place to a far better arrangement. Though insignificant affairs relatively to the merits and practical advantages of our monarchical system, they were very unpopular and there was often difficulty even in Conservative ranks. Conservative leaders never failed in advance to ask and to receive Mr. Gladstone's support. At times the Liberal party was in almost open revolt, but that made no difference to him. His defence of the votes brought great words for the monarchy and what might have been an inconvenient and dangerous occasion was made a strong and remembered tribute to the Throne.

So he laboured to weld the old with the new, to strengthen old bottles for the new wine, to lift men to higher ideals, to fashion the Constitution for the reception of new ideas, the complex action of new forces, and the strain of immense increase in work and responsibility.

True, he had been an agitator. Is he to be condemned because he took the field to counter the strong static opposition of Conservatives to the repeal of the paper duties, Irish Disestablishment, freedom in the Balkans, Reform, and Home Rule? On all these questions he proved to be right. Progress could alone be achieved by the instruction and support of millions of electors. Others had not the courage, will, determination,

power for the task. He had, and he did the task. Agitator, yes, but always a constitutional agitator. When he appealed to the masses for their support it was ever on the conditions not of class interests but of national well-being, the stability of the Constitution, and duty to the Crown.

With impassioned appeals went the steady words of cautious advice on the duties of citizenship.

The true test of a man, and the true test of a class, and the true test of a people, is power. It is a small thing as long as he has not power—as long as temptation is kept out of his way—that he should be tolerably just in his judgments, but it is when power has come into his hands that his trial comes. . .

You will have temptation near you, you—the labouring people of this country—when you become supreme to such a degree that there is no other power to balance and counteract the power which you possess. . . You have approaching you a deep and searching moral trial—you have to preserve the balance of your mind and your character, when you have become stronger than the capitalist, stronger than the peerage, stronger than the landed gentry, stronger than the great mercantile class—when you have become in one sense their political master, you have still before you one achievement to fulfil, one glory to attain and appropriate to yourselves—continue to be just.

I venture to give that warning for the future, it applies to the coming days more than to the days that are past, and I hope that the mass of this meeting will live into those days in increasing prosperity and happiness, and if they do so, I am sure they will remember with kindness what was at all events a well-meant suggestion¹.

And again :

Now is the time for the true friend of his country to remind the masses that their present political elevation is owing to no principle less broad and noble than these the love of liberty, of liberty for all without distinction of

¹ Speech at West Calder, Oct 23, 1890

class, creed or country, and the resolute preference of the interests of the whole to any interest, be it what it may, of a narrower scope.

He had served in Parliament for sixty-three years, the length of the Queen's reign ; in the Cabinet for twenty-seven. For over twelve years he had been Prime Minister. Then the end came. There was no personal farewell from his Sovereign.

CHAPTER IV

EASTERN ROUMELIA

“It should be remembered that what with the known timidity of his colleagues, and what with the strength and violence of the Russian party in England, his [Lord Beaconsfield's] achievement at Berlin was like the reclamation of butter out of a dog's mouth.”—GREENWOOD.

ON June 18, 1885, Mr. Gladstone resigned and was succeeded by Lord Salisbury. For six months Ireland mainly occupied the attention of the Government. But there is another subject which first needs attention. Almost at once affairs in Eastern Roumelia menaced the fragment of Lord Beaconsfield's policy which had survived the Treaty of Berlin. In Conservative circles drums beat and trumpets sounded over the re-transfer of some millions of Christians to the domination of the Turk.

Mr. Gladstone accepted the severance of Eastern Roumelia from Bulgaria as a *fait accompli* when he succeeded to office, and directed his efforts, through the European Concert, to compel Turkey to fulfil her obligations to Montenegro and Greece.

Prince Alexander of Battenberg was made Prince of Bulgaria in 1879, and became popular with the people. The Queen was much attached to him. He had shown independence of Russian wishes.



THE GLADSTONE COLLEGE, SOFIA

In September 1885 an insurrection took place in Eastern Roumelia: the people declared their union with Bulgaria, and swore allegiance to Prince Alexander. Russia struck Prince Alexander off the roll of the Russian Army. Lord Salisbury thought it important to uphold the Treaty of Berlin. The Queen, however, was much attached to Prince Alexander, and proposed to Lord Salisbury acceptance of union with a protest against a violation of the Treaty.

To which Lord Salisbury gravely replied by telegram on September 24:

In considering the attitude of England as to breach of Treaty of Berlin, it must be remembered that the maintenance of the Balkan frontier was the provision on which Lord Beaconsfield insisted at the risk of war. If England now takes the lead in tearing up the arrangement which she forced on Europe seven years ago, her position will not be honourable, and her influence will be much diminished. Wish of the Bulgarians for union was as well known then as it is now, and the danger of the big Bulgaria is not at all events diminished.

The Queen agrees that affairs were untoward, delicate, and difficult—"but the poor Prince has had his hand so forced". He had been insulted and ill-used by Russia.

But there were three horns to her dilemma—loyalty to Lord Beaconsfield's policy, friendship with Turkey, and hostility to Russia. As Lord Salisbury had succinctly stated, there was no change now from the position in June 1878. Hatred of Russia, that ever-dominant motive, compels the sacrifice. Lord Beaconsfield and Turkey must be sacrificed by agreement to the big Bulgaria.

But how could this startling reversal be made? The Queen in her difficulty turns to the policy of Mr. Gladstone.

Seven years before he had written on the big Bulgaria.

Let Bulgaria receive practical freedom, with freedom she will have contentment, with contentment the danger will disappear, and a true bulwark will be erected in the hearts and minds, the breasts and hands of freemen. Roumania has been during twenty years a true barrier to Turkey against foreign aggression

Yielding to necessity, in a letter to Lord Salisbury on September 25, 1885, the Queen "owns that she would have thought that the more powerful the Principalities and Kingdoms of the Balkans were, the stronger would be the buffer against Russian aggression of Turkey".

So came the policy of general recognition of a personal union of Bulgaria and Eastern Roumelia under Prince Alexander, and the Queen, on Mr. Gladstone's own argument, gave the *coup de grâce* to Lord Beaconsfield's Turkish integrity policy.

The decision was wise and just. It would have been wiser and more just had it been taken at Berlin in 1878—according to Lord Salisbury, under exactly similar circumstances. Mr. Gladstone did not alter his views. The Queen altered hers.

CHAPTER V

MR. BUCKLE AND IRELAND

“ The main question is whether Ireland is to have a free government, or whether Ireland is to be overridden by England and Scotland, whether she is to be made an exception in this great Empire—an Empire of many states, an Empire comprising one-fifth of the human race; an Empire on which, as has been truly said, the sun never sets, an Empire in which separate political societies and constitutions are to be counted by the score, and of which there is not one, sprung from the same source as ourselves, that does not enjoy a free government ”

GLADSTONE

I

PRECEDING and following Mr. Buckle’s crescendo to the fall of Khartoum are the Queen’s observations on Ireland.

The Queen was resolutely opposed to all or any concessions to Ireland in the administration of its own affairs. She held this view tenaciously to the end of her life. She hailed the departure of Mr. Gladstone and the advent of Lord Salisbury. “ What a relief,” she said.

Again, who can blame the Queen? Tradition and authority were on her side. At her accession she received that which had come down from Elizabeth and Cromwell, from William III. and George III. Had not Lord Beaconsfield himself in 1880 seen danger hardly less than famine and disease in Nationalist movements? The Act of Union must at all costs be maintained intact. Local government was the thin edge of the wedge, and must be rigidly refused.

We have had, up to June 1885, the royal frown upon Mr. Gladstone. After the opening words of relief, where is the smile on Lord Salisbury? It is precisely what we expect and do not get. The whole country awaited the decision of the new Government on what was to be the course of their Irish policy. Persons with some knowledge of recent history rub their eyes. What was the policy of the new Government? What about the story of the empty house, and its implications? What was the truth about Lord Carnarvon? Did Lord Salisbury know what Lord Carnarvon was doing, and agree with him? What was the Cabinet doing? Above all, what did the Queen herself say on what was going on? Why are we told absolutely nothing about this? We were told, when matters were less critical, so much about Ireland under Mr. Gladstone. Why now do we draw blank in a covert full of foxes?

“Let us”, these puzzled readers say, “refer to the Introductory Note.” What do they find? Four pages altogether.

Nearly a whole page is devoted to the Liberals and the General Election—a period of about three weeks. Secondary and even trivial matters occupy nearly three pages. One bald sentence of four lines is given to the Irish policy or concepts of the Government which were in full blast for six out of the seven months’ existence of the Government. Here it is :

The Crimes Act was allowed to lapse, while an Irish Land Purchase Act was passed; and the new Viceroy, Lord Carnarvon, adopted a benevolent attitude towards the Nationalists, even holding a secret talk with Mr. Parnell

C'est tout. No mention even of the close co-operation between Conservatives and Nationalists

at the General Election. Being benevolent, Carnarvon had even a secret talk with Parnell.

The historical interest in Lord Salisbury's short administration lies, first, in his Irish policy and, secondly, in the decision to abandon the policy of the small Bulgaria. On Bulgarian affairs we get full and fair information. On Irish policy next to nothing. In Irish affairs Carnarvon, in the summary, is the sole and apparently irresponsible actor. Just "benevolent", nothing more.

Mr. Gladstone being no longer in office, did the Queen cease to take interest in the Irish policy of her ministers? Did she write neither letters nor memoranda, and make no entries in her diary on Irish affairs? It is incredible. We are left in the dark. I must give the facts from such information as is available.

II

In 1925 Sir Arthur Hardinge published his *Life of Lord Carnarvon*. He gives a clear narrative of Government views and actions as regards Ireland.

In June 1885 Mr. Gladstone's Government fell, nominally on the Budget, actually on Ireland. The Queen in the ordinary course, when she sent for Lord Salisbury, would ask him what his policy was on the vital question of the day—the state of Ireland. There were no pressing difficulties abroad. But the Crimes Act was soon to expire. That which was scarcely less than "famine or disease" had to be met. Mr. Gladstone and Chamberlain, by pressing for an extended scheme of autonomy, had been making things critical. The Queen was passionately opposed to the Liberal solvent. Salvation came in the person of Lord Salisbury with his stalwarts. What was his Irish policy?

Now for the narrative.

On February 5, 1885, Lord Carnarvon wrote to Lord Salisbury : " Our best and almost only hope is to come to some fair and reasonable arrangement for Home Rule," with the protection of the Irish loyalists strongly guaranteed.¹

At a meeting of Conservative ex-Cabinet Ministers on June 15, 1885, Lord Carnarvon expressed these views :

I am clear that matters have arrived at a point when it is impossible to return to the old methods of government in Ireland. We must face existing facts, and run certain risks, and make certain sacrifices for the hope of curing that which, if increased, will destroy all government and the unity of the Empire.²

The following day Lord Salisbury *pressed* him to join the Cabinet as Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland.

Carnarvon accepted, but on the ground of health stipulated that he should only hold office till after the General Election or the meeting of the new Parliament.

I understand that my duty will be to satisfy myself as clearly as I can of the general feeling and state of Ireland and that my colleagues will in conjunction with me consider the whole future policy to and government of Ireland.³

The new Government adopted conciliation, says Sir A. Hardinge, as the keynote of their Irish policy. Carnarvon set to work actively on his mission. At the Cabinet on July 4, his advice to allow the lapse of the Crimes Act was adopted.

On July 6, with the Prime Minister's approval, he had a private interview at his own house with Mr. Justin McCarthy, Vice-Chairman of the Parnellite party, who suggested an interview with

¹ *Life of Carnarvon*, vol. III p. 151

² *Ibid* p. 157

³ The italics are my own in this narrative

Parnell himself.¹ The same day Lord Carnarvon spoke in the House of Lords on the conciliatory policy of the Government. "The questions of discord must be studied."

Then comes Maamtrasna.² Carnarvon defines the course, "not so much a defence of Spencer as a support of his defence by his own friends". Did a sophistical rhetorician ever surpass this? The Cabinet, on July 7, decided to oppose the reopening of the case.

Meanwhile Randolph Churchill was striving to make fast his piratical craft to the Nationalist ship. His offer was the reopening of the Maamtrasna case, an Agricultural Labourer Bill, and a land purchase scheme. Despite the Cabinet decision Hicks-Beach and Churchill surrendered in the House of Commons on Maamtrasna to Parnell. For a moment the curtain is raised. The Queen wrote to Lord Salisbury on July 18, condemning the language of Randolph Churchill. The Nationalists were totally unreliable.

Any attempt to have any communication with Mr. Parnell and his party she would greatly deprecate and he must not forget the so called Treaty of Kilmainham. . . When in opposition the present Government strongly supported and applauded measures of repression and of preservation of life which were so loudly called for in '82, and she would greatly deprecate any appearance of weakness now.

The Queen evidently had not changed her views on Irish policy. She ends her letter by referring to the apparent support given by the Nationalists to the Government. Were her suspicions aroused?

¹ Hardinge's *Life of Carnarvon*, vol. iii p. 164

² An atrocious murder case. Persons had been brought to justice, and Lord Spencer, with the full support of the Conservative Opposition, refused Parnell's demand for inquiry. In office when the demand was renewed, Carnarvon, Churchill, and others supported it.

In his reply of July 20, Lord Salisbury deals with the Maamtrasna case. He had voted against its being reopened. Hicks-Beach and Churchill in the House of Commons had agreed to an inquiry. The only thing Lord Salisbury could do was "to reconcile their views with the vote" he had himself given.

Lord Salisbury concludes :

He certainly agrees with your Majesty in thinking that the Nationalists cannot be trusted and that *any bargain with them would be full of danger*.

The curtain drops.

After his remarkable utterance on July 20, and in possession of the Queen's views, Lord Salisbury approved the secret meeting of Carnarvon and Parnell in the empty house, 15 Hill Street, on August 1.

It was to be very, very secret. Mr. Gibson, the Irish Lord Chancellor, was taken into confidence. Often had he denounced Mr. Gladstone on the Kilmainham Treaty and other Irish sins of the Liberal Government. Now he and Lord Salisbury were considering a bargain with Parnell. If not a bargain, what was it? Why else should it be so secret that Gibson urged there should be nothing written. "A friend should *say* the reply!" There had been no such secret plotting over the release of Parnell in 1882.

Writing to Lord Salisbury on July 26 (Hardinge, vol. iii. p. 175) Lord Carnarvon says :

A meeting with the person [Parnell] of whom I spoke when last we talked may be looked upon as settled. . . . I have some reason to believe that he would agree to an actual alliance if such were desired—an alliance would mean on his side the support of every Conservative Candidate at the Elections and on our side an undertaking to make a very large measure though not an extreme one, a Cabinet

question in the new Parliament *if we got a majority* This last alternative I certainly do not recommend, for many reasons which will occur to you I do not think there ought to be any *bond or covenant*, but I do think that if it can be managed *it is most desirable to try to understand what he really wishes, intends, would accept*

Lord Carnarvon went to Hatfield immediately after the interview on August 1. He drew up and showed Lord Salisbury a memorandum on what took place. Parnell subsequently made his own statement which went beyond what Carnarvon admitted. I pass that by, and give Carnarvon's own account (pp. 178-181). The question of a Central Parliament and a Central Chamber was discussed. Carnarvon made no definite commitment. But he raised the point of removal of the Irish members from the House of Commons if the representatives in an Irish Parliament "should be considerable". It is clear from Sir A. Hardinge's account that autonomy, *i.e.* Home Rule, was freely discussed.

Lord Salisbury "read and accepted the memorandum" (p. 181). They decided not to inform the Cabinet of the meeting. The Prime Minister held it "to be inexpedient" to tell the Queen!

Meanwhile a Cabinet had been summoned on August 3 to consider Lord Carnarvon's report on Ireland. "Strangely enough," Ireland was not mentioned. So Carnarvon wrote to Lord Salisbury a letter giving "an idea of the general conditions" which the Prime Minister read to the Cabinet (August 12). The Prime Minister informed the Viceroy that they had thought all the matters connected with Ireland so very difficult that they had made no mention whatever of the subject in the Queen's speech.

On August 17 the Viceroy went on tour in Galway. He wrote to the Queen on August 26,

but beyond dwelling on the general loyalty of the people, made no reference to political difficulties.

Soon after this Sir A. Hardinge tells us that Lord Carnarvon urged upon the Queen, through Sir H. Ponsonby, the expediency of establishing a permanent royal residence in Ireland. The Queen's views on this thorny question he does not give. Much correspondence passed with his colleagues on the state of the country.

On October 31 the Viceroy wrote to the Queen on crime, and the fall in prices. The Cabinet had met on October 3 and on October 6, when it was "almost entirely occupied with Irish affairs".

Hardinge thus describes Carnarvon's words to the Cabinet :

With regard to politics he described the immense and commanding position of Parnell, supported as he was by all parties outside the landlords, and holding in check for the time both Davitt and the American extremists. The landlords and tenants were fatally estranged, and in Ulster the Nationalist party were now in a majority. . . . *The mind of the whole people, except the landlords, was set on an Irish Parliament* This being the position what was to be the policy of Her Majesty's Government? . . . "I then went on to say that as regards the real, and the far larger question of a Local Parliament, I did not propose or urge the consideration of it on the Cabinet, that whilst I admitted the undeniable danger of such a measure, I was disposed to believe that there might be less danger in it than in any other solution" ¹

On all these matters, strange indeed as it appears, the Queen is silent. What had become of the Queen?

Then followed the famous Newport speech on October 7. Lord Salisbury alluded to Parnell's "remarkable" speech on the relations of Austro-

¹ *Life of Carnarvon*, iii. 193 *et seq*

Hungary, which seemed to indicate some new proposal in the direction of Imperial federation. In very guarded terms Lord Salisbury said that he had not seen any plan which gave him at present the slightest ground for any substantial solution of the problem. Like Mr. Gladstone the integrity of the Empire he held to be the first policy. He then proceeded to consider the best plan for local government.

The Cabinet again met on November 28, and again the thorny question of Ireland was discussed. No progress seems to have been made.

On November 25 Carnarvon went to Windsor. He found Her Majesty "*very much alive to the whole subject*". He spoke with plainness. We must therefore presume that he repeated to the Queen the view he had expressed to Lord Salisbury that "a fair and reasonable arrangement for Home Rule" was the best and almost the only hope. The Queen showed him Mr. Gladstone's memorandum of May 25. He sent the Queen a long criticism on Mr. Gladstone's suggestions. Still no views from the Queen!

The Conservatives went into the General Election without the Cabinet having made up its mind on the Irish question (p. 202).

Then, on December 14 and 15, the Cabinet met again. Lord Carnarvon recurred to a former suggestion of a Joint Committee of both Houses to consider the relations of Ireland and England, or the better government of Ireland, subject to the supremacy and authority of the Crown, and the rights of minorities in religion and property. Gibson, now Lord Ashbourne, was struck with a proposal to the Viceroy by Sir Michael Morris for a Select Committee, representative of all parties, to inquire into Home Rule. "If Gladstone and Hartington refused to join, the Government would

resign with honour. Parnell would probably serve on it."

"But the Cabinet would embark on no policy; and it resolved to meet Parliament and to challenge a vote of confidence."

In December 1885 Mr. Balfour and Mr. Gladstone were guests of the Duke of Westminster at Eaton Hall. A correspondence followed. Lord Morley describes, but does not give it. By the courtesy of Lord Balfour I give it *in extenso*.¹

Private.

HAWARDEN CASTLE,
CHESTER,
20 Dec. '85.

MY DEAR BALFOUR

On reflection I think that what I said to you in our conversation at Eaton may have amounted to the conveyance of a hope that the Government would take a strong and early decision on the Irish question. For I spoke of the stir in men's minds, and of the urgency of the matter, to both of which every day's post brings me new testimony.

This being so I wish, under the very peculiar circumstances of the case to go a step further and say that I think it will be a public calamity if this great subject should fall into the lines of party conflict. I feel sure the question can only be dealt with by a Government, and I desire specially on grounds of public policy that it should be dealt with by the *present* Government. If therefore they bring in a proposal for settling the whole question of the future Government of Ireland, my desire will be, reserving of course necessary freedom, to treat it in the same spirit, in which I have endeavoured to proceed with respect to Afghanistan and with respect to the Balkan peninsula.

You are at liberty if you think it desirable to mention this to Lord Salisbury. But for a great pressure on me I should have sent this letter sooner. I am writing however for myself and without consultation.

Sincerely yours,

(Signed) W. E. GLADSTONE

Rt. Hon. A. J. Balfour, M.P.

¹ The italics are not mine in this correspondence.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD,
WHITEHALL,
22nd Dec 1885.

MY DEAR MR. GLADSTONE,

I have deferred my visit to Dublin, and therefore did not get your letter of the 20th till this afternoon:—hence the delay in answering it

I have had as yet no opportunity of showing it to Ld. Salisbury, or of consulting him as to its contents, but I am sure that he will receive without any surprise the statement of yr earnest hope that the Irish question will not fall into the line of party conflict

If the ingenuity of any ministry is sufficient to devise some adequate and lasting remedy for the chronic ills of Ireland, I am certain that it will be the wish of the leaders of the Opposition, to which ever side they may belong, to treat the question as a national and not as a party one — though I fear that under our existing Parliamentary system this will not prove so easy when we are dealing with an integral portion of the United Kingdom as it proved when we were concerned with the remoter regions of Roumelia and Afghanistan.

If anything arises out of yr. letter which I think ought to be communicated to you, I hope you will allow me to write to you again. in the meanwhile

Pray believe me

Yr. v. sincerely,
(Signed) ARTHUR JAMES BALFOUR.

Private

HAWARDEN CASTLE,
CHESTER,
Dec 23, '85.

MY DEAR BALFOUR,

I thank you for your note, and taking its spirit into view, I think I ought to complete my former communication by assuring you that, while expressing a desire that the Government should act, I am not myself acting. Time is precious, and is the essence of the case. But, wishing them to have a fair opportunity of taking their decision, I have felt that *so long* as I entertained the hope connected with that wish (and how long [?] that will be of course I cannot say) I should entirely decline all communication of my own views beyond the circle of private confidence, and only allow to

be freely known, my great anxiety that the Government should decide and act in this great matter.

Sincerely yours,

(Signed) W E. GLADSTONE.

Rt. Honble A. J Balfour.

Private.

KEBLE COLLEGE,

OXFORD,

28 Dec. 1885.

MY DEAR MR GLADSTONE,

Just one line to acknowledge the receipt of yr last (second) letter, and to say that I will take care that it reaches the proper quarter.

With every good wish of the Season

Believe me

Yr.

ARTHUR JAMES BALFOUR

LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD,

WHITEHALL,

4 Jan 1886

MY DEAR MR GLADSTONE,

I have, as I promised, shewn yr last letter to Ld Salisbury. He desires me to express to you his great sense of the courtesy and conciliating spirit in which it was written. It suggests however a communication of the views of the government which at this stage would no doubt be at variance with usage. As Parliament will meet for business considerably before the usual time, he thinks it better to avoid a departure from the ordinary practice which might possibly be misunderstood.

Yr. v. sincerely,

ARTHUR JAMES BALFOUR.

While in no way committing himself, Mr. Balfour was a prompt and courteous intermediary. He submitted the letter to Lord Salisbury. Mr. Gladstone had written in strong and earnest hope. It was no manœuvre, no trap. I speak with intimate knowledge and in absolute sincerity. The policy of the Liberal party on Ireland at the moment was in his hands. The course of

things was to be determined by his own line of action. Parnell undoubtedly was ready to accept less from Lord Salisbury than from Mr. Gladstone. Had the Cabinet decided, without any commitment to Mr. Gladstone's offer of support, to continue and develop the attempts already made to find a *via media*, he would gladly, gratefully, and with his whole heart have responded. Whether a settlement could have been made such as might have proved lastingly satisfactory to Ireland it is impossible to say. But a practical agreement by good-will would have exorcised old and bitter memories, and established British relations with Ireland on a sound and friendly footing honourable to all parties.

Had the Government responded in that spirit to Mr. Gladstone the effect on his own action would have been immediate. He would have been under a definite obligation of honour to strengthen the hands of the Government in the work of settlement. It was not to be. Had Mr. Gladstone met Mr. Balfour and written a month earlier the result might have been very different. As it was, the Cabinets of December 14 and 15 had decided against the policy of settlement. Lord Carnarvon had surrendered to Lord Randolph Churchill.

The reception of Mr. Gladstone's overtures in the Cabinet is thus described by Lord Harrowby :

The chief business was a communication to A. Balfour from headquarters at Hawarden—too confidential for me to commit to paper. It stated generally that if we were prepared to deal with the whole question of the Government of Ireland, "that great question", he would be ready to deal with it in the same way as he had treated our action as to the Russian and Indian affairs, and as to the Balkan difficulty. At first it was nearly decided to adopt S's scheme and reply to the letter by stating in black and white that we had no intention of meeting in any way the principal

Irish demand, and to do this in such a way as to force the writer to an immediate declaration of his views in that direction. It was, however, represented that our premature declaration, which would immediately become known to the interested parties, might seriously complicate the position at the present moment of the Irish Government, and would precipitate disaster, and the meeting appearing to be evenly divided, S decided merely to acknowledge the communication and give no information as to our intentions before Parliament meets . . How dark and threatening the future is ! May God direct and guard us through it all !

Ireland was condemned to a further period of thirty-six years of agitation and ill-feeling, and eventually brought to rebellion, by which Mr. Lloyd George and his Government, predominantly Conservative, were forced to grant Dominion Home Rule.

III

I have briefly summarised the true narrative. Mr. Buckle veils it all under the guileless but wholly personal "benevolence" of Lord Carnarvon.

Yet it is obvious that Lord Salisbury and his colleagues were considering the policy of Home Rule as a possible policy of conciliation in all its bearings. The argument that what they sought was not Home Rule cannot be accepted. Home Rule is synonymous with autonomy. Like Mr. Gladstone, Lord Salisbury was considering, not the principle—for that was conceded—but its extent and conditions. I use the word "conceded" advisedly. Lord Salisbury pressed Carnarvon to be Viceroy in full knowledge that his policy was "a reasonable arrangement for Home Rule". From the first he thought it was not practicable, but he wished Carnarvon to do his best. Quite clearly Lord Salisbury accepted the principle of autonomy which was the very base of Carnarvon's ideas and efforts. He considered that it might be and

indeed was advisable, though not practicable On July 22 he asked this momentous question :

The hopelessness of managing England and Ireland together was never . . . brought into such startling relief

The old crucial question is still there How is England to be made to swallow measures that Irish authorities consider necessary for Ireland ? (vol. iii p. 173)

These despairing words were evoked by Carnarvon's requirements relating to Irish higher education and a monetary crisis.

But he would not split his party. I do not attempt to plumb the depths of this ethical problem. Nor is it necessary for my purpose. It is enough that Lord Salisbury at this time, impressed with the gravity and force of Nationalist demands, considered that Home Rule was not only not wrong, but that it was the actual duty of the Government to explore the whole ground, and, if possible, to devise a scheme for submission to the Cabinet.

Singularly enough, both he and Lord Carnarvon seemed to make their practical position conditional on success in the General Election. If they were beaten, apparently they were ready to drop Home Rule. Supposing that with the help of the Irish, which was in fact given, Lord Salisbury had secured a majority, Hardinge's revelations indicate that some form of autonomy in lieu of coercion would have been adopted. The result of the election determined another course. Could a General Election decide the rightness or wrongness of Home Rule on the merits of the question ?

I turn now for a moment to Winston Churchill's biography of his father.¹

Lord Randolph, when securing the Irish vote

¹ *Life of Lord R. Churchill*, vol. ii p. 44.

at the election, had a definite policy of his own. It rested materially on his conviction that the Parnellite majority would soon crumble. He was at the time the one pronounced opponent of Home Rule in the Cabinet. Both Carnarvon and Hart Dyke spoke strongly of the ignorance of Conservatives about Ireland. Lord Randolph was as wrong as Mr. W. H. Smith, who, after a few hours' investigation of the state of Ireland, reported to Lord Randolph on January 25, 1886, that the land question gave all the force to the agitation! One thing, however, seems clear. Lord Salisbury did not take Lord Randolph into his confidence until after the election when, slowly but surely, he was abandoning the cliffs of Home Rule for the engulfing morass of coercion.

Winston Churchill apparently saw no real significance in what Lord Iddesleigh called "fiddling with Home Rule". He throws no light on the events detailed in Sir A. Hardinge's book I return therefore to Sir A. Hardinge.

Though, like Peel, Lord Salisbury saw what was wanted he would not, like Peel, divide his party. At Newport he did not entirely close the door. Speaking to Hart Dyke, his Irish Chief Secretary, he held that "*the possible from a party point of view was quite separate from the advisable for the future of Ireland*". But he was ready to retire and facilitate Carnarvon's policy if adopted by the Cabinet.

I come now to Sir Stafford Northcote, who for five years had led the Conservative opposition in the House of Commons. He had criticised and often opposed the Irish policy of the Liberal Government, and had denounced the Kilmainham Treaty. What did this upright and able man think? He was a strong supporter of Lord Carnarvon.

Sir A. Hardinge tells us what he said on September 7.

“ I am disposed to admit the importance of legislating, and of administering affairs, so as to meet the wants and to conciliate the feelings and even the susceptibilities of the Irish people, treating ‘ Irish ideas ’ with great tenderness, so long as we are firm against separation from the Empire, against confiscation of property, and against lawlessness and disorder ”

The vague term “ Home Rule ” should, he said, be defined or avowed .

“ I should call ‘ Home Rule ’ an undistributed middle term , at all events it is one which ought not to be used without careful definition.

“ You accept Home Rule.

“ Home Rule means Separation.

“ You accept Separation

“ You reject Home Rule

“ Home Rule means Local Self Government.

“ You reject Local Self Government

“ But can we find a solution of the difficulty ? If we can, we ought to declare it . and I think, myself, that we ought to declare it before the dissolution , so that the Electors may vote with their eyes open ; and so that, whether victors or vanquished, we may have a distinct platform for our party *I am strongly impressed with the danger of leaving this great and cardinal question to be fiddled with and treated with Parnell in one way, and with the British elector in another way. There is both danger and disgrace in that sort of policy.* On the other hand, if we could announce a conciliatory but firm programme, we should strengthen both our own party, and the party sense and moderation throughout the country , and, if it is not too sanguine, I believe that we should attract to ourselves a good deal of the best class of Irish support.”¹

Northcote held that whatever was to be done, the Conservatives, exactly like Mr. Gladstone, must be firm against separation from the Empire, confiscation of property, lawlessness, and disorder. He was disposed to admit that the feelings, even

¹ Hardinge’s *Life of Carnarvon*, vol. iii. p. 191.

the susceptibilities and ideas, of the Irish should be treated "with great tenderness". But the term "Home Rule" was a great difficulty. He proposed to treat it as an "undistributed middle term". Logic did not solve the difficulty.

On the indisputable authority of Sir A. Hardinge I have now shown that up to December 1885—for a period of five months—the question of Irish autonomy, that is to say Home Rule, was under the serious consideration of the Conservative Government. The Irish question had brought about the downfall of Mr. Gladstone's Government in June. The Conservatives, by their hostility to his remedial proposals for Ireland, were responsible for that downfall. Lord Salisbury had to determine what policy he should submit to the country in the coming election in November. Was it to be coercion and no Home Rule? Or autonomy and no coercion?

No decision through a period of four months could be reached, and it was postponed till after the election in November. "Lord Salisbury said he would have some proposals ready about the first week in December when the election would be practically decided. The subject had been constantly in his mind for weeks past. He looked very ill and complained of ill-health."¹ On the terms mainly engineered by Churchill, the full strength of the Nationalists was given to the Conservatives.

• • • • •

The editing of the Queen's letters, it will be generally admitted, required absolute impartiality. Up to the date of Mr. Gladstone's resignation all letters and expressions of opinion on

¹ *Life of Carnarvon*, vol. iii p. 193.

Irish affairs adverse to him are given in full. The public has the right to ask why, after the entrance of Lord Salisbury, there is silence. Mr. Gladstone's Irish autonomy policy had not proceeded beyond Cabinet discussions, and the Cabinet decision that, because of differences of opinion, the Government could not proceed with any form of self-government. Yet the Queen's views are given in detail.

The Conservative Government takes office. The question of Home Rule is, by the authority of the Prime Minister, officially taken up by the Irish Government and submitted to Cabinet after Cabinet. Yet apparently the Queen has no views. Were the doings on the crucial question of the day concealed for months from the Queen? That is quite unbelievable. It is certain that the Queen would not have tolerated treatment so unconstitutional, so improper.

The fact remains that the Conservative Government seriously and rightly endeavoured to bring about a new departure.¹

When Lord Salisbury takes office in June the Queen is relieved to be free from Mr. Gladstone and his Home Rule views. Events, then, are concealed till Lord Salisbury reports to the Queen in December the final decision of the Cabinet on Irish affairs. There was to be a measure of local government on English lines.

¹ In a letter to *The Times* of December 22, 1928, Lady Gwendolen Cecil quoted from Sir A. Hardinge's book Lord Carnarvon's statement of June 23, 1886, that his chief had been "quite consistent in his objections to Home Rule", and that he throughout had refused to join in proposing an Irish legislature. I never suggested that in the negotiations of the preceding year an Irish legislature was contemplated. Lord Salisbury himself suggested Provincial Councils and a Central Appeal Court (See Whibley's *Lord John Manners*, vol. II p. 307). This was practically Mr. Chamberlain's plan to which the Queen was bitterly opposed. Negotiations were sufficiently definite to secure the Irish vote for the Conservatives at the General Election.

"It was not possible for the Conservative party to tamper with Home Rule." What is the precise difference between Lord Salisbury's "tampering" and Sir Stafford Northcote's "fiddling"?

All the information Mr. Buckle gives us on Conservative action in the course of six months I now give in a few lines.

1. Lord Salisbury's letter on the Crimes Act and Land Purchase (p. 685).

2. Letters from the Queen, Hicks-Beach, and Lord Salisbury on the Maamtrasna surrender (pp. 687-689).

3. The Queen says on October 6 that she is very anxious about Ireland (p. 700).

4. Sir Henry Ponsonby's letter to the Queen on opinions he had heard relating to Irish affairs, December 9 (p. 709).

5. Lord Salisbury reports the decision of the Cabinet against tampering with Home Rule, December 14 (p. 710).

Mr. Buckle gives us these wretched shreds. That is all. He does, however, give several letters and extracts on the sudden and startling outburst of the Queen on the necessity of organising a middle party recruited from Liberals and Conservatives. The Queen was disturbed by the result of the General Election in November. Again she works in advance against Mr. Gladstone. She wants a strong coalition against him (p. 709). She brings in the Court Physician, Sir William Jenner, and Mr. Goschen as agents for the plan. Sir Henry Ponsonby tells her (December 9) that the increasing opinion in London was that Mr. Parnell's demands to a certain extent must be conceded, or that strong repressive measures must be adopted. We are not given the Queen's answer. On December 14 Lord Salisbury himself tells her that local government would be extended to

Ireland. It was not possible to tamper with Home Rule. (In other words the Government had decided to cease "fiddling" with Home Rule.) Again we get no answer. The Queen's letters and diary extracts which are published raise questions on which no light is thrown. We are kept in complete confusion. There is not a single explanatory note by the editor.

Most certainly this was not from lack of knowledge. He knew the whole facts. We are told in Churchill's *Life of Lord Randolph* that it was Mr. Buckle himself who suggested to Lord Salisbury the famous paragraph condemning Home Rule in the Queen's Speech of January 1886, and thus indicating the inviolate firmness of Conservative anti-Nationalist policy.¹

IV

Remembering the attitude from the outset of the Prime Minister to Carnarvon, I pass to those who, on the evidence of Sir A. Hardinge, appear to have been associated with Carnarvon's views—to the responsible men who had come to the conclusion that the old regime in Ireland had broken down and should, if possible, be replaced by new methods of government, based on agreement with Parnell and the Nationalists. We shall be better able to understand how much that innocent editorial word in substantive form, "benevolence," can be made to cover.

1. The Prime Minister wished the Viceroy to

¹ "I have seen with deep sorrow the renewal, since I last addressed you [August 1885], of the attempt to excite the people of Ireland to hostility against the Legislative Union between that country and Great Britain. I am absolutely opposed to any disturbance of that fundamental law, and in resisting it I am convinced that I shall be heartily supported by my Parliament and my people" (Churchill's *Life of Lord Randolph Churchill*, vol. II p. 32)

try his hand at a new policy—"advisable" for Ireland.

2. The Viceroy, Lord Carnarvon. Of wide sympathies, a fine scholar, he had been a leading member of Lord Beaconsfield's Government but resigned on the Eastern Question. For long he was the champion of federation as a means of giving autonomy to South Africa. He was not popular in the Conservative party because of his resignation in 1878, but Lord Salisbury held him in high regard.

3. Sir Stafford Northcote for five years had led the Conservatives in the House of Commons. He had been Lord Beaconsfield's Chancellor of the Exchequer. Too gentle and courteous for the Tory democrats, he was one of the ablest and most distinguished men in the Conservative party.

4. Sir Michael Hicks-Beach succeeded Northcote as leader in the House of Commons. An inflexible Conservative, he had been Chief Secretary for Ireland. He was one of the most *essential* men in the Cabinet.

5. Mr. Gibson (Lord Ashbourne) on Irish affairs had been for years the Conservative protagonist against Mr. Gladstone. He had taken the extreme landlord and Orange course. Then, as Lord Chancellor for Ireland, he had to face the responsible position. We find him in the confidence of Lord Salisbury and Lord Carnarvon, actually a party to the empty house conference.

6. Lord George Hamilton, one of Lord Beaconsfield's rising men, was First Lord of the Admiralty. A strong Conservative of great honesty and, as his action on the Tariff question subsequently showed, of independence. Hitherto, he had been in strong opposition to Mr. Gladstone on Irish affairs.

7. Lord Harrowby, Lord Privy Seal.

8. Sir William Hart Dyke was a model Conservative with an unblemished record. He had been a trusted Chief Whip for years. He was now Chief Secretary for Ireland but had no seat in the Cabinet. He found and said that the Conservatives were "profoundly ignorant" of Irish affairs. He strongly backed Carnarvon's "benevolence".

9. Sir Robert Hamilton was one of the most distinguished men in the Civil Service. He had succeeded Mr. Burke as Permanent Under-Secretary. In the unearthing and suppression of the Invincibles, in restoring public order, for three years he had been Lord Spencer's right-hand man. On the greatness of this service the Queen and the Conservatives were alike agreed. No "Saxon" was more qualified to form a true opinion on the requirements of Ireland.

10. Mr. Jenkinson was the extremely effective head of the Irish C.I.D., possessing full knowledge of all the movements of opinion in Ireland.

11. Lastly, there was Sir Michael Morris, Chief Justice of Ireland, a man of distinction and authority.

All these men in their various positions of experience and knowledge held definitely and firmly that a new departure was desirable for the peace and unity of the United Kingdom. They were one and all suggesting methods by which Lord Carnarvon's "benevolence" could be converted to a practical policy for submission to the Cabinet. These methods or proposals were again and again submitted to the Cabinet *for discussion*.

I have made it indisputably clear that Carnarvon was not the sole actor under the inspiration of that blessed word "benevolence".

So far as the Cabinet was concerned, the position, as disclosed by Sir A. Hardinge, seems to have been this :

Associated with the scheme for a New Departure.

Lord Salisbury.
 Lord Carnarvon
 Sir Stafford Northcote ¹
 Sir Michael Hicks-Beach.
 Lord George Hamilton
 Lord Harrowby.
 Lord Ashbourne

Unknown

Lord Halsbury
 Sir Richard Cross.
 Colonel Stanley
 The Duke of Richmond
 Mr. W. H. Smith

Doubtful

Lord Cranbrook.

Against

Lord R. Churchill

Undoubtedly the most powerful section was Benevolent. Another Benevolent colleague was Hart Dyke, the Chief Secretary, who was not in the Cabinet, for the fullest authority in Ireland had been reserved by Lord Salisbury for Lord Carnarvon.

It is impossible for one moment to believe that Lord Salisbury and his colleagues concealed their actions, proposals, and deliberations on Irish affairs from the Queen. It is idle or worse to argue that the Queen heard without emotion that the Crimes Act was to lapse; that she did not ask what was to be put in its place; that she ignored Lord Salisbury's famous Newport speech; that she showed no interest whatever in these matters either orally or in writing. Not a word about Lord Salisbury's commission to Lord Carnarvon to find an acceptable *via media* on Home Rule. Not a word on the secret interviews with Justin McCarthy and Parnell. Not a word about

¹ Sir Stafford Northcote was created Earl of Iddesleigh in 1885

the successive Cabinet discussions of Carnarvon's proposals. In his introductory chapter Mr. Buckle withholds information and explanation of these and other matters.

In question form I put the points on which it is reasonably certain that the Queen recorded her opinions.

1. Did Lord Salisbury inform the Queen of the conditions attaching to the appointment of Lord Carnarvon as Viceroy ?
2. Did the Queen ask Lord Salisbury what his Irish policy was to be and was she informed of the new departure ?
3. Was she ever told and was the Cabinet told, and if so when, that Lord Carnarvon had had secret interviews with Justin McCarthy and Parnell ?
4. Did Lord Salisbury say to the Queen what he said to Lord Carnarvon on July 22, that it was hopeless to manage England and Ireland together ?
5. What report did Lord Salisbury write to the Queen on the Cabinet of August 12, when he had read to ministers Lord Carnarvon's memorandum on Ireland of August 7 ?
6. What was the Queen's reply to Carnarvon's letter of (about) August 26 to Sir H. Ponsonby, urging the expediency of establishing a royal residence in Ireland ?
7. Did Lord Salisbury inform the Queen that in August Carnarvon thought Parnell would carry eighty seats or more in Ireland ?
8. Were the views of Sir Stafford Northcote, Lord Ashbourne, Sir W. Hart Dyke, Sir Robert Hamilton, and other ministers and officials brought to the Queen's knowledge ?
9. Did Lord Carnarvon in his letter to the Queen of October 3 refer to the question of the Government of Ireland ?
10. The Cabinet of October 6 was concerned

with Ireland. Carnarvon reported that the whole people, excepting the landlords, were set on a National Parliament. Did Lord Salisbury send a report of this Cabinet to the Queen?

11. Did the Queen express any views to Lord Salisbury on the Newport speech of October 7?

12. What report did Lord Salisbury make to the Queen on the Cabinet of November 23, when Carnarvon's scheme for Ireland was discussed?

13. At Carnarvon's audience with the Queen on November 25 he found her "very much alive" on Irish affairs. Is there no record explanatory of this *liveliness*?

14. What opinions did the Queen give and what comments did she express on all these important matters?

The absence of light is serious. Leading personages are thereby exposed to unfavourable imputations.

Even if the secret of the empty house was never divulged, the Queen must have known of this great and earnest attempt at a new departure in Irish policy. Some form of autonomy was under consideration together with the dropping of the Crimes Act. This was something more than the "thin end of the wedge". Are we to suppose that the moderate views suggested by Mr. Gladstone in 1883-84, so strongly reprobated by the Queen, were to be condoned when countenanced by Lord Salisbury? The Queen is exposed to the charge of partiality and inconsistency of opinion.

Lord Salisbury's appointment of Lord Carnarvon for the *express purpose* of pursuing a definite policy of conciliation, and his knowledge and approval of the interview in the empty house demand explanation. After the General Election he abandoned conciliation and went decisively for

coercion. What was the reason for the change? We are not told. Lord Salisbury is left under the imputation that the motive in the empty house affair was to secure Parnell's support for the Conservatives in the General Election. The possibility of this was clearly indicated in Lord Carnarvon's letter which I have quoted (*supra*, p. 392).

Before passing to the effect of the volume as it stands on the position of Mr. Gladstone and the Liberal party, I wish to make it perfectly clear that I am not attacking Lord Salisbury and his colleagues for their action and discussions in regard to Ireland. There had been and continued to be root differences between them and the Liberals on Home Rule. But I look upon the events omitted by Mr. Buckle as the proof of a fine and genuine attempt at a national settlement with Ireland. It is the bright spot in the dismal and disastrous story of opposition to Home Rule by Conservatives and Whigs alike. I do not for a moment believe that Lord Salisbury was actuated by unworthy electoral considerations. He saw nothing wrong in the principle of Home Rule, and desired to make a real effort to probe the practical difficulties of its application to Ireland. His utterances, so far from being sanguine, were gloomy. The Cabinet was divided. The number of Conservative die-hards he knew to be considerable. He was not going to wreck his party. But the central fact is that he and about half the Cabinet thought a policy of autonomy and conciliation right in principle and "advisable" for Ireland. No other conclusion can be drawn from the history disclosed by Sir A. Hardinge.

To Lord Carnarvon Mr. Buckle does less than justice. Was he merely an amiable visionary,

pursuing a philanthropic fad on the somewhat contemptuous sufferance of his colleagues?

Let us see. We have documentary evidence. First, Lord Salisbury, knowing Lord Carnarvon's views on Ireland, actually pressed him, "almost as a personal favour," to take the post of Viceroy. In consenting Lord Carnarvon gave *the condition of his assent*. He was to satisfy himself as clearly as he could of the general feeling and state of Ireland. His colleagues, *in conjunction with him, were to consider the whole future policy to, and government of Ireland*

Second, the interviews with Justin McCarthy and Parnell demonstrated the intention of finding and adopting—what shall we call it?—an alternative to the old system of anti-national repression; a policy of conciliation; some form of autonomy by agreement; or, to be honest, some practicable form of Home Rule.

Third, Lord Carnarvon was supported by the leading officials of the Irish Government, and by at least half a dozen of his Cabinet colleagues.

I have now given as briefly as possible the authentic facts as given by Sir A. Hardinge.

What happened in the Cabinet it is impossible to say. Mr. Buckle is silent, and Sir A. Hardinge's information is scanty. In October Lord Carnarvon, though "Lord Asbourne confirmed all he had said, and Lord George Hamilton confirmed all the facts," found "no real supporters" in the Cabinet. But it is obvious that the whole question of Irish Government was discussed. "It is now too late", said Lord Carnarvon after the Cabinet on December 14 and 15, "to go back on the decision, and *we must hope that Gladstone will as he wishes deal with the question.*¹ But here again I dread the principles on which, I believe, he will proceed."

¹ *Life of Carnarvon*, vol. iii p. 207.

Then on January 3, 1886, so intense had become Lord Salisbury's dilemma that he wrote :

I am feverishly eager to be out *Internally*¹ as well as externally our position as a Government is intolerable²

He had found what he considered "the advisable for the future of Ireland" was not possible from a party point of view.³

The idea of the new departure was abandoned. In the words of Sir A. Hardinge, "The policy of conciliation was at an end. The truce was over; the combination of good feeling to England and of good government to Ireland was renounced as a hopeless task." Later, Mr. Gladstone took up the task which Lord Salisbury had thought desirable but found hopeless. That was Mr. Gladstone's sin.

What was to be the Conservative policy? The Cabinet *unanimously* fell back into the morass.

I sum up the whole matter.

When Mr. Gladstone proposed a moderate scheme of local government; and when in 1884 it developed into the Central Board plan, the Liberal Cabinet was divided and the proposals were defeated. Nevertheless, we find several agitated letters from the Queen, and her hostile mood on Irish self-government is maintained till Mr. Gladstone leaves in June.

Lord Carnarvon then goes one better than Mr. Gladstone, and attends in the empty house to see what Parnell would accept. Lord Salisbury approves, but is in perplexed doubt. Carnarvon makes his proposals, backed by all the responsible heads of Irish Government, and the Cabinet

¹ The italics are mine

² *Life of Carnarvon*, vol. III p. 210

³ *Ibid* p. 196

again and again consider the proposals. The General Election approaches. They had not been able to say anything about Ireland in the Queen's Speech at the end of the session of 1885. So divided were they that they could not agree upon a policy for the General Election. Volume III. is silent.

Mr. Buckle appears to trust in short memories about these past days, and with good reason. Even Mr. Wickham Steed, another former editor of *The Times*, in the *Review of Reviews* (February 1928) is forgetful. So far as I know the *Manchester Guardian* alone of all the journals which reviewed Volume III. had them fully in mind.

We reach the stage when, because of divided counsels, Lord Carnarvon hopes that Mr. Gladstone will deal with the question. Lord Salisbury is "feverishly eager to be out". Of these months which seethe with matters of historic interest on which the Queen must have held and expressed strong views—not a word! We have had from the Queen tar in buckets for Mr. Gladstone; and now exoneration by silence for Lord Salisbury and his colleagues.

Up to June Mr. Gladstone's local government policy had not even been made public; it was still in embryo. Lord Salisbury and Lord Carnarvon, I repeat, made a practical effort to get agreement with Parnell on a more advanced policy and, exactly like Mr. Gladstone, failed to get a majority in the Cabinet. Was there a desire to shield Mr. Gladstone's opponents for the purpose of making their subsequent opposition to Mr. Gladstone seem consistent and sincere? A few frank words from Mr. Buckle in the Introductory Note might have clarified the very strange situation.

The issue of Home Rule was directly raised in the Queen's Speech of January 1886. The Con-

servative Government finally and absolutely committed themselves to the rejection of Home Rule and to reliance upon force and coercion. The challenge was accepted by Mr. Gladstone.

At once Home Rule became anathema, and not because of detailed proposals. On February 26, Churchill, at Belfast, declared war against Mr. Gladstone in a speech described by Lord Salisbury on March 3 as "a brilliantly successful effort". Soon afterwards, in a letter, was coined the phrase, "Ulster will fight, Ulster will be right". War was defiantly declared. Not until *April 8* was the Bill itself introduced. The Conservatives attacked not Mr. Gladstone's Home Rule Bill in concrete form, but his Irish policy on which he formed his Cabinet.

I propose to examine whether it is or is not practicable to comply with the desire widely prevalent in Ireland and testified by the return of 85 out of 103 representatives, for the establishment by statute of a legislative body to sit in Dublin, and to deal with Irish as distinguished from Imperial affairs ; in such a manner as would be just to each of the three kingdoms, equitable with reference to every class of the people of Ireland, conducive to the social order and harmony of that country, and calculated to support and consolidate the unity of the Empire on the continued basis of Imperial authority and mutual attachment¹

Here at last, like a blast of fresh air, was the true and only issue. It swept away the timid manœuvres, the secret conclaves, the whispers, the casuistical evasions, the indecision which had persisted through six months. It is fair to ask what difference there is between these basic principles and those enunciated at various times by Lord Carnarvon which almost absorbed the attention of the Conservative Cabinet from June to December in 1885 ?

¹ Morley's *Life of Gladstone*, iii p 292

Supposing Lord Carnarvon, supported as he was by Lord Salisbury, had secured the assent of the Cabinet, he would have had to solve the innumerable problems inseparable from any change, however moderate, in the composition of the Irish Government. He was too timid to draw even an outline of what he nevertheless insisted was necessary, but weakly kept on saying that what he proposed or would have proposed was quite different from Mr. Gladstone's plans.

Because Mr. Gladstone adopted in principle the policy of conciliation which clearly and unmistakably Lord Salisbury and several of his colleagues would have adopted had there been general agreement in the Cabinet, a stream of obloquy, never surpassed in bitterness and intensity, was for nearly ten successive years directed against him.

*The Times*¹ took up the running against Mr. Parnell and his colleagues as directly associated with crime. It was with these men Mr. Gladstone consorted. To these men he proposed to hand over Irish affairs. To these men the Conservatives had never truckled. The grant of autonomy (or Home Rule) was an act of disloyalty and disintegration of the Empire for party purposes. And so on and so forth.

The fact remains that the Conservative opposition to Home Rule in and after 1886 in its nature and virulence was in contradiction to the policy of Irish conciliation by Lord Salisbury in 1885. Condemnation of Mr. Gladstone for adopting the principle of Home Rule in 1885 and his attempt to find a practical solution of it in 1886 must involve condemnation of Lord Salisbury for his attempt at the same policy in 1885. Between the attitude of the Conservative Government before

¹ Mr. Buckle was editor of *The Times* from 1884 to 1912.

and after the General Election of 1885 is a deep chasm of inconsistency.

The biographers of Lord Carnarvon and Lord R. Churchill during the period of Lord Salisbury's Government concentrated their whole attention on Irish affairs. Why is Volume III. silent on the one question which absorbed the attention of the whole country?

I can suggest only one reason—that Conservative opposition to Mr. Gladstone and his Home Rule action must be shown to be continuous. It would never do to prove departure from a stern, unbending attitude and to show that the Conservative Government themselves had more than touched the accursed thing. It would never do to justify Mr. Gladstone in any sort of way. The lapse from rectitude must not be mentioned, so that the Conservatives, fresh from denouncing him in June, with gathered strength from a holiday time in which nothing particular had happened, could renew their onslaught in the New Year.

Mr. Buckle cannot argue that the omissions related to small incidents. The final rejection of conciliation on December 15, 1885, plunged the country into turmoil and discredit for the next thirty-six years. Through all these years our relations with the United States were endangered by the bitter hostility of Irish Americans. This tragic decision was destined, in a time of stress and peril, to lead to rebellion and war between Great Britain and Nationalist Ireland. Who can say that the Great War itself would have broken on us had there been peace and good-will between Great Britain and Ireland in 1914? A great historical issue was at stake on December 14 and 15, 1885.

After thirty-six years the Conservatives, with one or two notable exceptions, found, as Mr.

Gladstone had found before 1886, that Nationalism was the root of the long Irish trouble. Was separation the solution? Separation cannot be read into the moderate scheme proposed by Mr. Gladstone, accepted by Parnell, rejected by the Conservatives in 1886. In 1920 the Conservatives agreed to sever the Parliamentary bond and to repeal the Act of Union as the price of the delay they themselves had created. All that Mr. Gladstone proposed, and much more, was given. Was the action of the Government in 1920 a surrender to force or an admission of justice? If, as Lord Birkenhead said, it was an act of justice, why is justice denied to Mr. Gladstone?

After all, perhaps, Mr. Buckle cannot be blamed beyond a certain point. He followed his leaders. Secretiveness unfortunately dogged the footsteps of the prime actors of the Conservative Cabinet in the policy of conciliation. They seemed afraid of everybody. *This* should not be told to the Queen; *that* should be kept from the Cabinet. Randolph Churchill must be kept in the dark. When Lord Carnarvon wished to resign he was urged to hold on till Parliament met. Resignation would be misunderstood; it would have a bad effect on the party. Nothing was publicly said. Cabinet discussions were carefully hidden from the public. When Lord Carnarvon did resign, a curious thing happened. What purported to be his letter to Lord Salisbury of June 16, 1885, was published on January 16, 1886, to allay reports that the resignation was due to differences of opinion.

I desire to accept the post as limited to the period which I have indicated, so that when I resign it at the appointed time, there may not be the slightest feeling that I give it up from any difference of opinion with yourself or the party....

Would reports and rumours have been allayed if that part of the letter had been published which proved that Lord Carnarvon only joined the Government on the condition that his colleagues, in conjunction with himself, should consider "the whole future policy to and government of Ireland" ?¹

I cannot help reflecting what would have been said, what would not have been said, had Mr. Gladstone, in like manner, pursued at any time this fashion of omission and secretiveness.

Sir A. Hardinge—evidently not friendly to Mr. Gladstone personally—devotes some 100 pages to the consideration of Lord Carnarvon's endeavours as Viceroy. They well deserve close study in the absence of all information in Volume III. Persistently, and with weak inconsistency, Carnarvon asserts that his policy was not Mr. Gladstone's. Yet in all his cogitations and proposals he saw clearly one inevitable condition—it must be something which was or would be accepted by the Nationalists as an Irish Parliament.

After the introduction of the Government of Ireland Bill, Lord Carnarvon was at first reserved. As opposition strengthened he expressed the opinion that the Bill was on wrong lines. In his memorandum of 1886 he believes he "could have steered the ship safely into harbour". But how he would have improved on Mr. Gladstone's Bill he never said—probably was never able to say.

Sir A. Hardinge's presentation of Lord Carnarvon as Viceroy shows that he had clear vision and excellent intentions. In action he was a non-combatant. He took office with the zeal and ardour of a Crusader, but when he reached the Holy Land he took every opportunity of assuring the infidels that he meant no harm, and would put

¹ Hardinge's *Life of Carnarvon*, vol. iii. p. 211.

them to no personal inconvenience. He felt it his duty to express his views and to do his best by peaceful persuasion. If they would not be persuaded, well he would just go quietly home and leave Cœur de Lion, with whose violent methods he so strongly disagreed, to do the fighting. And so it was.

Readers of the *Life of Carnarvon* will observe that "Cabinet secrecy" on the events with which I have dealt appears to have been rigidly maintained up to the General Election of 1886. In fact revelations were delayed until the publication of the *Life* in 1925.

As it stands, the last chapter of Volume III. of the Queen's letters exposes the Queen and Lord Salisbury to serious misapprehension. To Mr. Gladstone and the Liberal party grave, and I must add deliberate, injustice is done.

"The controversy of 1886", says Winston Churchill, "can never be resolved. Whatever may happen in the future, neither party can be brought to the bar of history and proved by actual experience right or wrong."¹

Why? Churchill wrote in 1906 with the calm impartiality of a young man who was crossing the floor of the House from Conservatism for a limited period of years to Liberalism and Home Rule. He did not anticipate events soon to come.

From 1885 Mr. Gladstone never faltered in his great and last fight for granting to Ireland Home Rule for the precise reasons given by the Government in 1921 for its concession in fuller measure by treaty between two nations. He was defeated in 1886 and in 1893. Was he not right where Lord Birkenhead, speaking for his colleagues in 1921, admitted the Conservatives were wrong?

After the miseries of the Irish rebellion peace

¹ *Life of Lord R. Churchill*, vol. ii. p. 50.

came in 1920. Thirty-four years earlier Mr. Gladstone, on the motion for the second reading of the Government of Ireland Bill, 1886, made his appeal to the nation.

We . . . hail the demand of Ireland for what I call a blessed oblivion of the past. She asks also a boon for the future ; and that boon for the future, unless we are much mistaken, will be a boon to us in respect of honour, no less than a boon to her in respect of happiness, prosperity, and peace. Such, sir, is her prayer. Think, I beseech you, think well, think wisely, think not for the moment, but for the years that are to come, before you reject this Bill

APPENDIX I

THE PUBLIC HEALTH ACT, 1875

In his *Life of Disraeli*, vol v, p 362, Mr Buckle opens by quoting Mr Disraeli's "famous watchword", *Sanitas sanitatum omnia sanitas*, from a speech made on April 3, 1872. He then proceeds to describe what the people wanted—better and healthier housing conditions, sanitary and commodious houses, easy access to light and air, and "all the beneficent influence of nature". All these wants had been neglected by the Liberals. Having thus indicated the policy and objects of Mr Disraeli, Mr Buckle proceeds to "results" "Finally Cross in this same session [1875] consolidated and amended the whole sanitary code in the Public Health Act—the *foundation* on which all subsequent amendment in detail has been built" Readers of the biography will naturally believe that the Liberals had done nothing, and that Mr. Disraeli in the Public Health Act initiated a great and new policy of housing and sanitation in fulfilment of his pledges

I must now give the true facts

In 1871 Mr Stansfeld, President of the Local Government Board in Mr. Gladstone's Government, amalgamated competing authorities into one central authority, the Local Government Board (now the Health Department). In the following year, 1872, he passed his notable Public Health Act. Administration of national health affairs had been chaotic. The country was now for the first time divided into urban and rural sanitary districts, each with a responsible Medical Officer of Health, the whole being co-ordinated under the Local Government Board. The Board was given powers to send their inspectors into these districts to inquire and report. Power was also taken to constitute port sanitary authorities. In this practical and beneficent way did the Liberals "sniff" at the policy of sewage

There were 26 Acts in existence bearing on the Public Health, and this led to complication in administration. In 1874 Mr Sclater-Booth, who had succeeded Mr. Stansfeld, brought in an Act for the purpose of clarifying the law by amendment. The effect seems to have made confusion worse confounded. In 1875 Mr Sclater-Booth—not Mr. Cross—introduced the Bill to consolidate and amend the law. The 1874 Act, he said, was obscure. The new Bill consolidated 28 existing Acts and included the Acts of 1871 and 1872. It consisted of 343 clauses. On the Second Reading Mr. Sclater-Booth declared that “it was primarily a Consolidation Bill. The Government did not intend at the present moment to propose any violent changes in the sanitary legislation *which had so recently been adopted*” [by Mr Gladstone’s Government]

The Bill raised no new principles, and was entirely non-contentious. In Committee some five pages of Hansard contain such discussion as there was on the whole of the 343 clauses.

Mr. Disraeli took no part in the proceedings, and Mr Sclater-Booth assured the House that the Bill was “not taken up in fulfilment of any engagement made by the Prime Minister”.

Mr. Buckle’s zeal took him much too far. The Local Government Board Act of 1871 and the Public Health Act of 1872 were operative measures which laid the foundation of our sanitary system. This was the great contribution by the Liberals. The Act of 1875 was a most useful and necessary measure for consolidating the law. But as Mr Sclater-Booth said, it had nothing to do with Mr. Disraeli’s engagements, which remained unfulfilled. The Rivers Pollution Act of 1876 was a useful measure, but it formed no part of a general scheme of sanitation.

APPENDIX II

THE GLYNNES

The connection of the Glynnnes with Hawarden dates from the Commonwealth. The home of the family was Glynllifon in Carnarvonshire. William Glyn, the first to bear that surname, was Sheriff of Carnarvonshire in 1562. John Glynne was born at Glynllifon in 1603. He took a leading part in the impeachment of Strafford (1641) and was a member of Parliament. Imprisoned in the Tower by Cromwell, he regained the favour of the Protector and was one of the Commission appointed to deal with Charles I at Carisbrooke Castle. After being ejected from the House of Commons by Colonel Pride he became Serjeant-at-law in 1654, and Chief Justice in the following year. He was an adept at reconciling his position with circumstances, and at the Restoration was made one of the King's Serjeants and was knighted.

Hawarden became his property in these circumstances.

The manors of Hawarden, Mold, and Hope were purchased from the sale of delinquents' land by Colonel George Twistleton¹ and Captain A. Ellis, who had previously agreed with Charles, Earl of Derby, to buy the three manors in trust for him. The purchase money, with interest, was to be repaid within a year. This agreement was witnessed by Serjeant Glynne and Sir Orlando Bridgeman. On the failure of the Earl to repay the purchase money a series of negotiations took place between the Earl, the Serjeant, and the purchasers, and Hawarden was eventually conveyed to Glynne with the full concurrence of the Earl of Derby.²

¹ Colonel Twistleton was a Yorkshireman who married Mary, daughter of William Glyn. He was buried at Clynas Fawr, close to Glynllifon.

² *The Cheshire Sheaf*, by M^l Trevor Parkin, formerly Chancellor of the Diocese of St. Asaph.

The property remained in the possession of the Glynnnes till 1874.

Sir Stephen Richard Glynne, eighth Bart (born 1780, died 1815), married Mary Neville, second daughter of the second Lord Braybroke, and had four children :

Stephen Richard He succeeded to the property

Henry He became Rector of Hawarden

Catherine. She married Mr. Gladstone

Mary. She married Lord Lyttelton

How, in 1847, the Hawarden estate was involved in financial liabilities amounting to a quarter of a million, how Mr Gladstone spent years in working to save the estate, how he purchased the reversion and at once passed it on to his eldest son, William, after spending on the property from first to last £267,000, is fully told by Lord Morley.¹

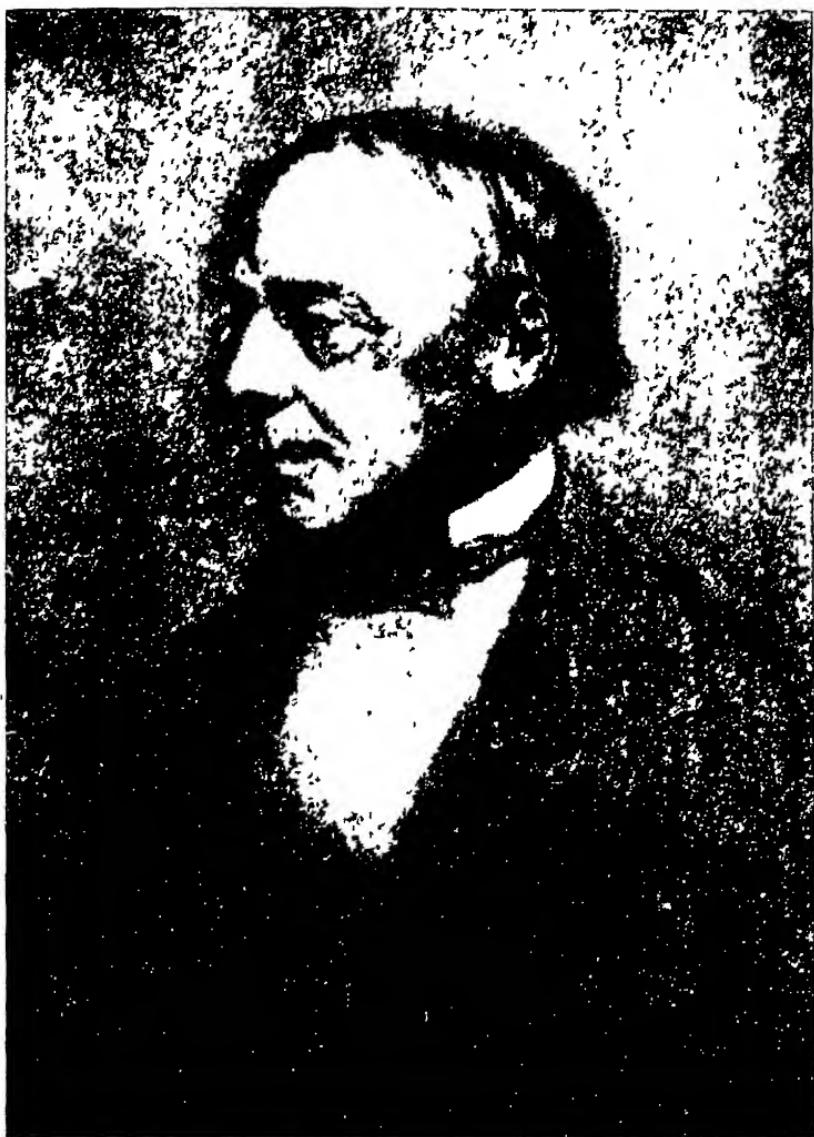
On the death of W H Gladstone in 1891, his son William Glynne Charles succeeded Will Gladstone joined the Royal Welsh Fusiliers in 1914 and was killed in action near Laventie in 1915. He had realised that the burden of succession would be more than his uncle, the Rev. Stephen E. Gladstone, could bear. Accordingly he, by will, had created a life ownership of the Castle in favour of Henry Neville Gladstone and subject to this of Albert Charles Gladstone.

In order to free the estate from its heavy burdens, Henry Gladstone released his life interest in favour of Albert Charles Gladstone but continued to reside on and manage the estate and later acquired Hawarden Castle and repaid the charges and debts and other obligations upon the estate, with the result that the succession of the descendants of Stephen Gladstone to the unencumbered properties is assured.

Mr. Gladstone was never the owner of Hawarden excepting the few months after the death, in 1874, of his brother-in-law, Sir Stephen Glynne, which were occupied in transferring the whole property to his eldest son.

It has been said that Mr. Gladstone was a wealthy man, but this is not correct. He inherited from his father about £5000 a year. He had, in addition, the salaries of the various public offices he held during his life. His literary

¹ *Life of Gladstone*, vol. i. p. 337.



SIR STEPHEN RICHARD GLYNNE, 9TH BARONET

From a Painting at Hewarden

earnings amounted approximately to £20,000. But the whole of his available capital was absorbed by purchase of land in 1847 to save the estate, and to discharge liabilities. This was so heavy a strain that in 1874 he had to sell 11 Carlton House Terrace and the greater part of his art collections. In fact, he never was, in the usual sense of the word, a wealthy man.

His devotion to life at Hawarden was in no small measure due to the personal attractions of his brothers-in-law, Stephen, the owner of the estate, and Henry, for thirty-eight years Rector of Hawarden. Both men were of a vanished type. Stephen, a scholar, a great antiquarian, and a lover of music, was a confirmed bachelor. He was Lord-Lieutenant of Flintshire, and discharged his duties as such and as a magistrate with unfailing zeal. His spare time he occupied in visiting and studying all the most interesting churches in the whole country. In some forty notebooks he recorded their special features. *Churches of Kent* was published after his death and remains an authoritative book. His simplicity, learning, and quaint humour made him most attractive to young and old. The family was not complete without him. He represented the Flint boroughs and subsequently the county for fifteen years.

Henry Glynne, born in 1810, was a man of fine presence, good to look upon. At the age of twenty-one he went from Christ Church into Parliament to keep the Flintshire boroughs warm for his elder brother. He was fond of shooting and riding, but he soon took orders, and according to the custom of the time he became Rector of the family living of Hawarden¹ in 1834, which he held to his death in 1872. It was one of the richest benefices in the country, the income at that time being £4000 per annum.² It was also a "peculiar"—that is to say that in certain respects it was independent of episcopal jurisdiction. Henry Glynne preached sound sermons, was what was then called high and dry, exercised a dignified and undisputed sway, and drove in a carriage and pair when he did not ride. He built three churches in the

¹ He succeeded George Neville (afterwards Neville-Grenville), who in 1813 was appointed Master of Magdalene College, Cambridge, and Rector of Hawarden, and was subsequently Dean of Windsor. The Dean was Mrs Gladstone's uncle.

² Stephen Gladstone succeeded as Rector in 1872 and held office for thirty years. Under the Welsh Disestablishment Act the present stipend is £800 per annum.

more distant parts of the parish, and lived an exemplary life. Like his brother, he had an attractive sense of humour and was excellent company. The Castle and the Rectory were always in close connexion. In 1875 his younger daughter, Gertrude, married George, afterwards Lord Penrhyn.



HENRY GLYNNE, M.P. FLINT BOROUGH 1831

Rector of Hawarden, 1834-1872

APPENDIX III

THE BULGARIAN ATROCITIES, 1876

REPORT BY EUGENE SCHUYLER TO THE AMERICAN
GOVERNMENT, AUGUST 10, 1876

“Batak.—Of the 8000 inhabitants not 2000 are known to survive. Fully 5000 persons—a very large proportion of women and children—perished here, and their bones whiten the ruins, or their putrid bodies infect the air. The sight of Batak is enough to verify all that has been said about the acts of the Turks in repressing the Bulgarian insurrection. And yet I saw it three months after the massacre. On every side were human bones, skulls, ribs, and even complete skeletons, heads of girls still adorned with braids of long hair, bones of children, skeletons still encased in clothing. Here was a house the floor of which was white with ashes and charred bones of thirty persons burnt alive there. Here was the spot where the village notable, Trandafil, was spitted on a pike and then roasted, and where he is now buried. Here was a foul hole full of decomposing bodies; here a mill dam full of swollen corpses, here the schoolhouse, where 2000 women and children who had taken refuge there, were buried alive; and here the church and churchyard where fully 1000 half-decomposed forms were still to be seen.”

REPORT BY MR. BARING ON THE BULGARIAN INSURRECTION
OF 1876 SEPTEMBER 1, 1876.

“Batak—I visited this valley of the shadow of death on the 31st of July, more than two months and a half after the massacre, but still the stench was so overpowering that one could hardly force one's way into the churchyard. In the streets at every step lay human remains, rotting and sweltering in the summer sun—here a skull of an old woman with the

grey hair still attached to it—there the false tress of some unhappy girl, slashed in half by a *yataghan*, the head which it had adorned having been probably carried off to be devoured by some of the dogs, who up to this time have been the only scavengers.

“Just outside I counted more than sixty skulls in a little hollow, and it was evident from their appearance that nearly all of them had been severed from the bodies by axes and *yataghans*. From the remains of female wearing apparel scattered about, it is plain that many of the persons here massacred were women.

“It is to be feared also that some of the richer villagers were subjected to cruel tortures before being put to death, in hopes they would reveal the existence of hidden treasure. Thus Petro Triandaphyllos and Pope Necio were roasted, and Stoyan Stoychoff had his ears, nose, hands, and feet cut off.

“Enough, I think, has been said to show that to Achmet Agha and his men belongs the distinction of having committed perhaps the most heinous crime that has stained the history of the present century, Nana Sahib alone, I should say, having rivalled their deeds. . . . For this exploit Achmet Agha has received the Order of the Medjidie”

APPENDIX IV

THE NILE EXPEDITION, 1884

The hopeless incapacity of the Egyptian Government to establish and maintain its authority in the Soudan is shown from the so-called conquest of Darfour in 1875. Gordon was successful there in his regime, but after his departure in 1879 discontent smouldered and danger increased. The appearance of Osman Digna in 1884 menaced the Red Sea littoral. Before anxiety arose over Gordon's position at Khartoum in 1884 the Suakim operations were closely connected with the Soudan. Military opinion was conflicting on suggested plans for restoring order. After the battle of Tamai (March 13, 1884) Gordon proposed an advance of a small force from Suakim to Berber. This was at first opposed by General Stephenson, the Commander-in-Chief, but subsequently supported by him and Sir Evelyn Wood. The scarcity of water admittedly made this risky. The question of Gordon's safety had not then arisen, and the Government decided against the scheme.

“The idea of a British expedition for the relief of General Gordon may be said to date from April 1884”¹

The Government asked for the opinion of military experts. Wolseley, on April 8, recommended the Nile route. The relieving force should be at Berber not later than October 20. Gordon could hold out till November 15.

On May 4, Stephenson telegraphed.

“Propose Suakim route: Wood prefers Korosko desert, Nile route impracticable . . . Best time for expedition to start October. Wood says for Korosko earlier, August. For Suakim early September”²

On May 6 Berber was captured by the rebel forces.

¹ Colville's *Official History of the Soudan Campaign*, vol. 1. p. 26

² *Ibid.* p. 32.

During May, June, and July other experts were at work on the comparative merits of the different routes.

On August 3 Admiral Lord John Hay reported against the Nile route. Other experts, Sir John M'Neill, Sir Redvers Buller, and Colonel William Butler, supported Wolseley.

On August 7 a vote of credit for £300,000 was taken in the House of Commons. Lord Hartington informed Sir F. Stephenson that this was to enable H.M. Government to undertake operations for the relief of General Gordon should they become necessary. The Government had not wholly abandoned the idea of the Suakim route, but the most recent information pointed to a different direction. Preparations were ordered to be made at Wady Halfa. General Stephenson adhered to his preference for the Suakim route.

On August 26 the Government gave the command of the Nile expedition to Wolseley, who arrived at Cairo on September 9, and took command. He carried a firman in his pocket in case Gordon should refuse to obey orders.¹ On September 21 the Government decided that Wolseley, if necessary, might advance beyond Dongola.

On September 11 Wolseley asked for large reinforcements for the relief of Khartoum, "*in the event of such an operation becoming inevitable*". He also said, "I should entertain a great hope that upon the arrival at Old Dongola or Debbeh of a fairly imposing British force, any further serious operations would become unnecessary". Even on this late date Wolseley saw no immediate danger.

The reinforcements were at once sent by the Government and arrived by the dates specified by Wolseley.

It was not realised before August by Wolseley and other experts that special boats would have to be constructed. On receiving the report of a committee of experts, construction of 800 boats was at once sanctioned, but it was not till October 18 that the last consignment left England. Construction and delivery occupied two months. Not till November 1 did regular embarkation of troops begin.² Subsequently a further delay—some three weeks—was caused by an unfortunate omission of the military authorities to provide coal for the river steamers.³

¹ *Life of Wolseley*, p. 186.

² Colville's *Official History of the Soudan Campaign*, vol i Appendix 3, p. 182

³ *Life of Wolseley*, p. 141.

APPENDIX V

WRIGHT *v* GLADSTONE

I have not considered it necessary to make allusion in this book to the action Wright *v* Gladstone in 1927. The case itself in full detail is to be found in the official records.

I content myself therefore with a brief statement of the reasons which led my brother Henry and myself to do all we could to force Captain Wright to take legal action.

We knew that under the surface slanderous allegations against Mr. Gladstone still survived. They originated in 1876, and we knew of them, for the most part, through anonymous letters. No chance of taking action was given to us till Captain Wright published a book of essays in 1925. In this book infamous charges were made positively. We were advised that because Mr. Gladstone was dead we could not take legal action. Even if the circumstances warranted our taking the law into our own hands, a charge of assault would not have enabled us to produce the facts and information we desired. If we took no action it would have been open to Wright or anyone else to say that the charges were true because two of Mr. Gladstone's sons were alive when they were made and dared not take any action. Such statements would have the appearance of truth. We held that if we did nothing, we should fail in our duty as sons. Moreover, we had reason to know that the allegations were disturbing the minds of many of those who revered Mr. Gladstone's memory. Doubts and apprehensions would grow in the course of time, we could see that already the charges had impressed the minds of those without personal knowledge of him. My brother and I, being of advanced years, realised that when we were gone there would be no one to give the evidence we alone could give.

After taking the best advice available, we decided to send

a letter in terms which would force Captain Wright to take action. Strong as those terms were, Wright declined to take proceedings. But in a letter disclosed in the proceedings of the case *Wright v. the Bath Club*, I used phrases which led to the action of *Wright v. Gladstone*.

Our Solicitor was the Hon. Sir Charles Russell, Bart.,¹ and our Counsel, Mr. W. Norman Birkett, K.C., and Mr. Theo Matthew.

The case was heard before Mr. Justice Avory and a special jury on January 27, 1927. Judgment was given on the fifth day, February 3, 1927. The finding of the jury was as follows:

MR. JUSTICE AVORY. Members of the jury, I understand that you are agreed that the gist of the defendant's letter of July 27 was true.

THE FOREMAN OF THE JURY: That is so, my lord.

MR. JUSTICE AVORY: You need not trouble about the other question, then. That is only an alternative defence.² That is a verdict for the defendant.

MR. NORMAN BIRKETT: My lord, I ask for judgment for the defendant—

THE FOREMAN: The jury would like to add something to that, if they may.

MR. JUSTICE AVORY: Yes—I will not have any noise in court. If anybody makes a noise after this warning, I will commit them for contempt.

THE FOREMAN: The jury wish to add that in their unanimous opinion the evidence that has been placed before them has completely vindicated the high moral character of the late Mr. W. E. Gladstone.

MR. NORMAN BIRKETT: My lord, I ask for judgment for the defendant, and with costs.

MR. JUSTICE AVORY: The costs follow.

¹ Sir Charles Russell, second son of Lord Russell of Killowen, died in March 27, 1928. He gave to the case not only his great professional abilities, but his whole heart. I place here on record our deep gratitude to him.

² The defence of privilege.

APPENDIX VI

GUESTS AT COPENHAGEN ON THE " PEMBROKE CASTLE," 1883

The Emperor and Empress of Russia.
King and Queen of Denmark
King and Queen of Greece
Crown Prince and Crown Princess of Denmark ; Prince Valdemar, Prince Wilhelm, and Prince Hans.
Princess of Wales.
Princess Mary of Hanover
Grand Duke Nicolas
Prince Vladimir Obolensky, Maréchal to the Russian Emperor.
Prince Albert Victor of Wales.
Princesses Louise, Victoria, and Maud of Wales.
Children of the Emperor of Russia and of the King of Greece.
Count Olsonfiell, A D C to the Russian Emperor.
Count and Countess Toll
Countess Olgasof.
Countess Aglaé Goleneschtchew-Routonsow.
British Minister to Denmark and Mrs Vivian.
British Secretary of Legation, Mrs. Gosling, and the Misses Gosling.
Danish Minister of Marine, Commodore Mildal, and Admirals Brunn, Krieger, and Fledemann of the Danish Royal Navy.

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